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Clinton committed to role in Somalia

MARTHA'S VINEYARD (R) — The White House Monday expressed concern over the injury suffered by six American soldiers in Somalia but said President Bill Clinton remained committed to a role in the U.N. mission there. "We're obviously concerned about it," said White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers. "But it does not change our commitment to the mission there." The soldiers were preparing to leave Somalia Sunday when their truck was destroyed by an explosion in Mogadishu believed to have been set off by members of a militia of Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aided.

25,000 more Sudanese flee into Uganda

NAIROBI (R) — About 25,000 more southern Sudanese refugees have fled into Uganda to escape fresh fighting between government forces and rebels, a United Nations official said Monday. Ahmad Sayed Farah, representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Uganda, said the latest influx brought to 63,000 the number of Sudanese who have crossed into the country this month. "About 25,000 have crossed since Friday," Mr. Farah said. "I am afraid an estimated 60,000 more refugees may cross into Uganda." Mr. Farah said a further 4,800 Sudanese were reported to have crossed into Zaire. "It appears there is total confusion with villagers fleeing in different directions," Mr. Farah added. The Khartoum government launched an offensive against Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels in the area was launched early this month. Churchmen and aid workers say the drive threatens to cut relief supply routes to huge areas affected by famine. SPLA officials told Reuters on Monday fierce fighting was raging at Morobo, a village 15 kilometres north of the border town of Kaya.

King visits Oman

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein will Tuesday pay a brief visit to Oman for talks with Sultan Qaboos Bin Sa'id, an official announcement made on Jordan Television said Monday.

Hariri in Oman

MUSCAT (AP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, seeking aid to rebuild battered South Lebanon, arrived Monday for talks with Sultan Qaboos Bin Sa'id. Arab countries, including Oman, promised \$500 million in assistance following last month's Israeli blitz against guerrillas in South Lebanon. The Arab states of the Gulf region are expected to contribute the most. Mr. Hariri, accompanied by Arab League Secretary General Amr Abdul Meguid, was in Bahrain on Sunday and then in Qatar before coming to Oman.

Babangida to quit, his aide say

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military ruler General Ibrahim Babangida will step down on Wednesday, a senior aide said on Monday. "I can assure you that he is leaving on Wednesday," the aide, who asked not to be named, told Reuters (see earlier story on page 8).

Libyan minister delays Turkey trip

ANKARA (R) — Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al Montasser postponed a visit to Turkey, due to have begun on Monday, at the last minute, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said. The ministry did not give a reason but the Turkish treasury said that talks on Turkish-Libyan trade ties, soured by huge debts owed by Libya to Turkish contractors, were going ahead. A Libyan delegation was due in Ankara on Wednesday for a three-day joint economic commission meeting. Mr. Montasser said he had been due to meet President Suleyman Demirel, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller and Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin.

Mars probe 'missing'

PASADENA (AP) — Space engineers are looking for the "missing" Mars observer spacecraft probably was hit by a temporary computer glitch and is not lost in space forever. They repeatedly radioed commands in an attempt to get a response from the spacecraft, a high-tech robot designed to give scientists their most detailed global look at Mars. Even without a reply, Mars observer has automatic computer programming to make it fire its thrusters and start orbiting the red planet on Tuesday. It then would try to contact Earth on Wednesday, said Glenn Cunningham, manager of the \$980 million project run by Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Engineers lost touch with Mars observer about 9 p.m. Saturday (0100 GMT Sunday).

Turkish Cypriot premier sets election date

NICOSIA (R) — Turkish-Cypriot Prime Minister Dervis Eroglu said Monday parliamentary elections would take place in the breakaway north of Cyprus on Nov. 28. The Turkish news agency said Mr. Eroglu disclosed the early election date to visiting Turkish journalists in the port of Kyrenia. No other details were immediately available.

Pakistan bans street meetings

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan's election commission has promulgated a code of conduct for the run-up to the October elections, banning public meetings on streets and main roads and barring provocative sectarian speeches. A commission statement published Monday said no leader or candidate during the campaign shall call the leader or candidate of another party kafir (non-believer) or a traitor. The code, devised after consultations with leaders of the main parties, does not lay down any special penalties for violations, which will be dealt with under the existing rules, officials said. The elections are being held under a neutral government formed after the resignation of former President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on July 18 under an army brokered settlement of the bitter political rivalry between them.

King: No reversal of decision to cut ties with occupied lands

'Question marks' over PLO's Gaza-Jericho proposal Assassination plot 'not surprising' because of frequent attacks

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday ruled out any reversal of Jordan's 1988 decision to sever administrative and legal ties with the Israeli-occupied territories noting that the severance of relations came upon the request of the Palestinians.

"Our decision stands. There is no going back on it, and there is no point of discussing this question in any form," the King said in an interview with Agence France Presse (AFP).

"The Palestinian brothers had sought to shoulder their own responsibilities concerning their own cause with our full backing. As long as this is what they chose on the basis of Resolution 242, one can only go along this line and there is no room for going back in any way," he said.

King Hussein said he was surprised by a proposal from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat for a partial Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and called for urgent talks with the PLO.

The King said there had been "no coordination at all between Jordan and the Palestinians on the question of an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho."

Mr. Arafat Saturday called on Israel to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank city of Jericho at the start of an interim period of Palestinian self-rule.

But the King said he had not examined the possibility of a partial Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

The absence of coordination between the two sides raised "question marks" over the consequences of such a pullout, he said.

"We are awaiting an opportunity to look at this question and that of general coordination with the Palestinians as soon as possible in order to avoid any negative repercussions," the monarch said, without elaborating.

Mr. Arafat arrived here unexpectedly later Monday (see separate story).

In his interview with AFP, the

King called on the Palestinian negotiating team with Israel to seek clarification on the final status of the occupied territories, which the PLO leadership agreed should not be discussed until the third year of self-rule.

"It is necessary to have a precise idea on the final status" of the occupied territories, he said.

King Hussein added it was "strange that while Arab states are discussing the status of their occupied territories the Palestinians are negotiating an interim step towards a final solution."

"The question I ask myself is, what is it an interim step towards?"

On a possible federation or confederation of Jordan and the occupied territories, he said: "All the choices must be made freely in the future by the two peoples."

"Such matters should be left to the people to decide on once they have freedom of expression and have the right to self-determination," he said.

"There is an occupied land with its people, and we hope that

the occupation will end soon so that their sufferings will end and they would be in a position to make their own choice."

In 1972, he said, "we put forward three proposals: Return to unity that existed before 1967; a union between Palestine and Jordan; or an independent Palestinian state."

"I remember that the PLO recognised U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 after Jordan's 1988 decision to sever relations," the King said.

However, he added, Jordan offered the idea of an umbrella to the Palestinians to peace talks with Israel in order to overcome obstacles in the way of holding the peace talks.

"Jordan will continue to provide all forms of assistance and backing to the Palestinians until they regain their homeland," he said.

King Hussein said he had "proof" that army cadets were involved in an Islamic fund-

(Continued on page 10)



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is received upon his arrival here Monday by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majall and other officials (Petra photo)

Arafat arrives, says Jericho no substitute for Jerusalem

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat arrived Monday to assess with His Majesty King Hussein the Middle East peace process before the 11th round of Arab-Israeli negotiations next week.

In arrival comments, Mr. Arafat said that the Palestinians will not cede Jerusalem as their capital and that "Jerusalem is not solely a Palestinian issue but is of concern to all Arabs, Muslims and Christians."

The Palestinian president said that the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank town of Jericho was one of the options to be discussed in the next round of Arab-Israeli talks.

The talks are also expected to focus on Palestinian-Jordanian committees set up during a visit by Mr. Arafat in July to lay the groundwork for confederation between Jordan and any future independent Palestinian state.

Two of them, an economic committee headed on the Palestinian side by PLO Executive

Committee member Sulaiman Najjaj and a broader and security committee headed by Executive Committee member Yaser Amr, are scheduled to hold their first meetings on Tuesday (see pages 3 and 10).

Mr. Arafat was asked whether reports that he was ready to accept such a limited Israeli withdrawal at this stage were true and whether it meant that he was ready to accept Jericho as a "temporary capital" for a Palestinian government headed by him.

He said the Palestinians insisted on Jerusalem being their capital and that Jericho cannot be a substitute for the Holy City.

Mr. Arafat, who will attend the meeting of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committees opening here today, was received upon arrival by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majall and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani and other officials.

King Hussein was expected to meet the PLO chairman later Monday.

Mr. Arafat expressed hope that the 11th round of Arab-Israeli peace talks will be fruitful. "Let's wait and see," he said.

He stressed that the PLO Executive Committee was unified in supporting Palestinian political moves. A recent meeting held in Tunis and attended by the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks confirmed the PLO's unity, he said.

He said that Mahmoud Darwish, a member of PLO Executive Committee, did not resign but suspended his political activities to dedicate more time to writing.

A PLO spokesman told the Palestinian news agency Wafa that resignations had to be submitted to the Palestine National Council, which elects the executive. The last session of the PNC was in 1991.

"The wish of brother Mahmoud Darwish to devote his time to his creative work, which we are proud of, is an old and legitimate wish, but his resignation has not yet been examined," a PLO statement said in Tunis.

Mr. Darwish, a noted poet, said on Friday he had resigned from the Executive Committee to give all his time to his intellectual work.

(Continued on page 10)

Merbah laid to rest; suspect held

Combined agency dispatches

ALGIERS — Some 2,000 people attended the funeral Monday of assassinated former Algerian Prime Minister Kasbi Merbah, as one of the five suspects in the killing was reportedly arrested.

Mr. Merbah was buried in "Martyrs Square" in the national cemetery of Al Aia where some of the most famous members of the Algerian national movement have been laid to rest.

But as the funeral cortege set off from Mr. Merbah's family home his widow branded former President Chadli Benjedid a "murderer."

Her head shrouded in a white shawl as a sign of mourning, Mr. Merbah's widow, Mrs. Fatima, briefly addressed the crowds waiting outside her home in El Bair.

She said that Mr. Benjedid was responsible for the deaths of all intellectuals and journalists, accusing him of having led Algeria into its current chaos.

The independent daily Al Watan reported Monday that a suspect wounded in Saturday's shootout had been arrested. No other details were given, although the paper reported that Mr. Merbah had fired back at his assassins before dying.

Mr. Merbah and four others died when five gunmen sprayed their two cars with bullets near the ex-premier's summer home on the outskirts of Algiers, family members said.

Among the mourners at the

funeral were Prime Minister-designate Redha Malek, new Defence Minister General Lamine Zerroual and former President Ahmad Ben Bella.

Mr. Merbah, 55, was buried along with the four other victims who died in the bloody attack, his son, Hakim, 25, his brother, Abdul Aziz, 52, and his driver and bodyguard.

No one has claimed responsibility for the ambush although authorities have blamed Muslim militants who, since January 1992, have waged a rebellion against the military-backed government after it cancelled elections that the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

The small nationalist opposition party that Mr. Merbah headed, the Algerian Movement for Justice and Development, hinted that other elements might be behind the murders, calling it the work of "professional killers."

"They have killed the man who sought dialogue and national reconciliation," the party said in a statement.

As recently as July 12, Mr. Merbah, who was also a former head of the country's dreaded political police, had advocated dialogue with Islamic extremists to restore "civil peace" to the country.

Mohammad Bouidaf, first president of the ruling High State Council, was assassinated June 29, 1992, although it remains unclear whether Islamic militants were behind the killing.

Muslim militants were blamed for attacks on three government ministers early this year.

Mr. Malek, the premier-designate, is said to be in favour of a tough crackdown on militants.

Mr. Merbah's assassination has also revived a controversy between the country's political parties, some of which advocate negotiating with the militants and others which favour force to crush the fundamentalist movement.

Observers say the killing of Mr. Merbah was significant as he was a member of the opposition and had expressed reservations about the government's cancelling the elections. He had also urged the authorities to negotiate with the now-banned FIS.

On Monday, the Islamic Renaissance Movement (MRI) of Sheikh Abdullah Djaballah condemned Mr. Merbah's killing, saying in a communique that it amounted to "a dangerous sign that blind terrorism was taking hold."

It added that the assassination was aimed at "plunging the country in a dark hole that only serves the interests of the West."

France said it hoped the appointment of a new Algerian prime minister would lend impetus to its struggling programme of economic and political reform.

Algeria's five-man presidential council sacked Prime Minister Abdul Salam Belaid Saturday and appointed Mr. Malek to take his place.

Israel to maintain blockade of Palestinians

Occupied Jerusalem (Agencies) — Israel has approved continued funding of jobs for a limited number of Palestinians living in the occupied territories, signalling continuation of a controversial exclusion policy.

Gad Ben-Ari, a spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, said a budget of 45 million shekels (\$16 million) would fund "initial work" for 15,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

This would keep the "make-work" project going until the end of October.

"The decision is to continue the same project created in May," Mr. Ben-Ari said. At that time the government allocated \$11 million to fund jobs for Palestinians in the areas where they live during the months of June and August.

Israel sealed off the Palestinians of the occupied territories in March after a rash of fatal attacks on Israelis by Arabs. The move cut off 100,000 Arabs from mostly menial jobs in Israel.

The closure was condemned by Palestinians for barring them from East Jerusalem, although Israel has been allowing about 50,000 workers to enter on limited permits to work in agriculture and on building sites.

Meanwhile, Palestinian sources said that relative of Sami Namar Zaarub, 33, who was found dead in his cell in the Gaza prison on Saturday, wanted a Danish coroner to conduct an independent autopsy on his body.

Military sources said Mr. Zaarub, who had been in military custody on arms charges since May 4, died of pneumonia, but Palestinian officials said he died as a result of army brutality while in custody.

The Palestinian-Israeli Organisation for Human Rights has asked the state prosecutor to investigate whether the prisoner had been placed in an icy cell during interrogation and to explain why he was not admitted to hospital.

Another group, the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre, said more than 30 Palestinians have died in prison since the start of the anti-Israeli uprising in the occupied territories in December 1987.

An Israeli opposition party accused the government Monday of ripping down protest banners across the country because they opposed any return of the Golan Heights to Syria.

"They are taking down hundreds of signs to advance their political views," said Gonen segev, a parliament member from the far-right Tsomet party.

Executive Committee to meet on PLO crisis

Combined agency dispatches

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) will meet Thursday in Tunis to discuss a financial and political crisis crippling the organisation, a committee member said Monday.

The PLO's leadership called for the meeting to examine the organisation's internal and financial situation, Abdul Rahim Maljub, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's (PFLP) political bureau, told AFP in Amman.

A prominent member of the 18-strong committee, poet Mahmoud Darwish, announced his resignation on Thursday and Shafiq Al Hout, the PLO's representative in Lebanon, said Sunday he was suspending his participation in the decision-making body.

Mr. Maljub said other resigna-

tions were in the offing, adding that "a growing number of Executive Committee members were very concerned about the PLO's political concessions."

He said the PLO's institutions faced collapse due to the financial crisis facing the leadership.

Mr. Maljub said he would attend, even though the PFLP has boycotted Executive Committee meetings since November 1991 to protest against the conditions under which the Palestinians committed themselves to the Middle East peace process.

Another Executive Committee member, Tayseer Khaled of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, blamed the current crisis on corruption in the leadership's upper ranks.

"The financial blunder

(Continued on page 3)

"Confidence crisis," page 10.

Iraq: U.N. talks should aim at lifting sanctions

AMMAN (Agencies) — Iraq insisted Monday that technical talks with the United Nations at the end of this month should also discuss Baghdad's demand that world trade sanctions be lifted.

An Iraqi Foreign Ministry statement, read to the Associated Press in Amman by telephone, confirmed that Baghdad would participate in the Aug. 31 talks.

Those talks are aimed at resolving an impasse over the deployment of monitoring cameras at Iraqi missile sites. The cameras have been installed, but are not yet switched on, pending the outcome of the New York talks.

The ministry statement said Iraq wants the talks to include the possible lifting of international sanctions imposed on Iraq after its Aug. 2, 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

With the United States and

Britain still firmly in favour of sanctions, Iraq is not expected to make much progress towards lifting the punitive measures imposed three years ago.

The talks will be a follow-up to the July visit to Iraq by Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission charged with destroying Iraq's non-conventional and long-range weapons.

General Amer Rasheed, head of Iraq's military-industrial commission, will head Baghdad's delegation to the meetings, said a ministry statement.

In an interim compromise to avert a U.S. attack, Iraq agreed to the placement of cameras at the missile sites. But they will not be activated unless the talks in New York resolve various issues on long-term monitoring.

"On the basis of the agreement

Sheikh Jaber in Syria

DAMASCUS (AP) — Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah arrived Monday for talks with President Hafez Al Assad on the Middle East peace talks and regional security.

In Beirut, police defused a bomb at the entrance to a building housing offices of two Kuwaiti companies, a day before the emir's scheduled arrival in the Lebanese capital.

Sheikh Jaber arrived in Damascus from Cairo where he held similar discussions with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. A new round of Middle East peace talks begins Aug. 31 in Washington.

The emir and Mr. Assad also were expected to discuss the Damascus declaration, signed by eight Arab states in 1991.

The plan involved stationing tens of thousands of troops from resource-poor but manpower-rich Syria and Egypt in the oil-rich but lightly populated Gulf, to help prevent a repetition of such events as the invasion of Kuwait. It soon foundered and the Gulf states went their own way.

Syria and Egypt had sent troops to the Gulf region to join the U.S.-led coalition force that drove Iraq's army out of Kuwait.

In Beirut, a police spokesman, who cannot be named in line with regulations, said the bomb, attached to a timer, was defused at 2:58 p.m. (1158 GMT) two minutes before its set-off time.

He said the bomb was planted at the entrance to an eight-storey building housing offices of Kuwait Airways and Bank of Lebanon and Kuwait in Beirut's Hamra commercial thoroughfare.

The airline is owned by the Kuwaiti government and most of the bank's shares are owned by Kuwaiti Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Al Sabah.

Petitioners try desperately to keep Demjanjuk in Israel

Change of law, repeated appeals in court, and 'prima facie evidence' among tools

By Ruth Ebenstein
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — Opponents of John Demjanjuk's release will do anything they can to prevent him from leaving Israel, they said Sunday — even if it means changing the law to get him retried.

"I'm already speaking with members of parliament from the left and the right," Avi Bekor, a spokesman for the World Jewish Congress, told The Associated Press.

Israel's supreme court last month overturned a 1988 death sentence against the 73-year-old Ukrainian-born Ohio auto worker for being Ivan the Terrible, a Nazi camp guard who killed over 800,000 people at the Treblinka camp.

But it said there was convincing evidence he belonged to a Nazi guard unit that helped kill people and served in the Sobibor camp.

In all, eight high court justices and the attorney general have decided against a new trial, citing the danger of double jeopardy and saying legal proceedings against Mr. Demjanjuk have already dragged on too long.

The attorney general also noted that the original 1986 U.S. extradition order was only to allow Mr. Demjanjuk to stand trial for the charges relating to Sobibor.

Nine petitioners disagreed, and last week were granted until Sept. 2 to find new reasons to keep Mr. Demjanjuk in Israel to face trial for charges related to Sobibor and elsewhere.

Mr. Bekor said he hoped the process would buy enough time to change the law so Mr. Demjanjuk would be tried.

"We want the parliament to initiate a motion saying the law dealing with Nazi criminals should be more flexible in matters of extradition and double jeopardy," he said.



John Demjanjuk

said. Efraim Zuroff, a spokesman for another U.S.-based petitioner, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre of Los Angeles, agreed that Israel needed pushing from the appellants to bring Mr. Demjanjuk to justice.

"The sad story is that instead of Israel doing the work itself, private organizations are forced to," Mr. Zuroff said in an interview.

"The trouble with Israel is we try to be holier than the Pope," Mr. Avraham Cassirer, an attorney representing eight survivors of Sobibor living in Israel, told the Associated Press. "France would have hung him, the UK would have killed him, Germany would have locked him away forever."

Mr. Cassirer said his tactics would be to file and refile for appeal until Mr. Demjanjuk gets retried. He hopes to get a sitting of 11 judges — the historic maximum for the court — to hear the appeal.

This would mean that the eight justices who have already said Mr. Demjanjuk should not be retried would have to step down temporarily, to be replaced by district court judges.

A statement from the Justice Ministry said that an appeal to an 11-justice court was theoretically possible.

Irwin Cotler, an expert on international law working with the World Jewish Congress, rejected repeated appeals, saying that if the supreme court rejected next month's appeal, that would be the end of it.

He preferred to focus on Israel's obligations under international law as an appeal tactic.

"The international law principle is overriding whenever a person is found in any jurisdiction against whom there is prima facie evidence of crimes against humanity," Mr. Cotler said.

He said Israeli law was problematic in making an appeal stick, because the supreme court would be in the unusual position of overriding the attorney general if it ordered a new trial.

"The criterion is that the supreme court will intervene only if the attorney general was unreasonable in the extreme," he said. "That criterion in itself is unreasonable and inappropriate."

Mr. Zuroff said the Wiesenthal centre would address double jeopardy by introducing evidence that Mr. Demjanjuk was at other camps not mentioned in the original trial.

He admitted that all the research was not in, but "we know that someone in those places in his position was involved in implementing the final solution," Mr. Zuroff said, using a Nazi euphemism.

Yoram Sheftel, Mr. Demjanjuk's lawyer, has said the petitioners are exploiting Israel's legal system to deny Mr. Demjanjuk his rights — and has noted that the new charges have come late in the game, seven years after his extradition.

Mr. Zuroff conceded that point. "A lot of these avenues were not fully explored because we were convinced we had Ivan the Terrible," he said.



LEBANON MISSION: Qatari Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani (left) Sunday with Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul

Meguid. The Arab League chief is accompanying Lebanese Premier Rafik Hariri on a visit to the Gulf states to raise funds for Lebanon (AFP photo)

Berne: No negotiations with PKK over hostages

BERNE (R) — Switzerland has said it would not negotiate directly with the PKK (Kurdistan Labour Party), which has kidnapped three of its nationals in south-eastern Turkey.

"We will not negotiate directly with the PKK. The Turkish authorities are responsible for security in Turkey," Foreign Ministry spokesman Franz Egle said.

The Brussels-based Kurdish committee said on Saturday the armed wing of the PKK (Kurdistan Labour Party), which is fighting for a separate Kurdish state, had seized four foreign tourists in its latest strike against Turkey's lucrative tourism industry.

Switzerland said later that three of its nationals — a young married couple and a man — were missing, along with an Italian. The Swiss are all from the southern canton of Ticino, bordering Italy.

The Kurdish committee said the home countries of the four tourists should contact ERNK, the political wing of the banned PKK. But Turkey will not allow any country to negotiate directly with the PKK, saying this would imply recognition of the rebels.

The Swiss foreign ministry issued a statement Sunday evening saying Switzerland's embassy in Ankara had asked Turkish authorities to help secure the

release of the three Swiss hostages.

Mr. Egle said contacts had been going very well and that the Turkish authorities had been "very cooperative."

The Swiss embassy in Ankara has been in contact with the Turkish authorities, with the aim of finding out where the hostages are, and asking Turkish support in securing their release," the ministry's statement said.

The ministry added there were "indications that the PKK were behind the kidnappings" and said it had set up a group of experts whose aim was to secure the speediest possible release of those kidnapped.

"The first task is to find out where the hostages are, and what is their state of health," the statement said.

Spokesman Egle said he could not confirm reports that the hostages were Jehovah's Witnesses, who were in the region to seek the remains of Noah's Ark.

Mount Agri (Ararat), which lies just inside modern Turkey, is a popular site for Biblical researchers looking for the ark. Jehovah's Witnesses are a Christian fundamentalist sect which rejects all other religions and denominations, believes in the imminent end of the world and refuses to accept civil authority where it clashes with its own principles.

Former first lady of Israel dies

TEL AVIV (AP) — Ofira Navon, the former Israeli first lady who brought a high profile to the job by lobbying for the rights of the disadvantaged, died Sunday at 57.

Mrs. Navon, wife to fifth Israeli President Yitzhak Navon, died from leukemia at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in occupied Jerusalem, Israel Radio said.

When her husband was inaugurated into the largely ceremonial post in 1978, Mrs. Navon raised the profile of a job that most of her predecessors were happy to keep low-key.

"It's a very hard job," she told Israel army radio in May after the latest president, Ezer Weizman, was sworn in. "But there is the satisfaction of the fact that you are at the centre of power, that you can use your ties, your ability to influence."

Mrs. Navon, a developmental psychologist, lobbied for the rights of the disabled and for children's rights.

In 1979, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and rejected a mastectomy, opting for chemotherapy and a lumpectomy. Later, she argued for the right of the patients to determine treatment.

Yitzhak Navon served as president until 1983. The couple represented Israel during its first peace treaty with an Arab state, the Camp David accords with Egypt, and during its most controversial war, in Lebanon.

By the time she was 19, Ofira Erez had been named "Sabari" (native-born Israeli girl) of the year, and had represented Israel in a beauty contest sponsored by the French magazine, Elle. She married Mr. Navon in 1963.

She was the first Israeli-born first lady, and the couple was the first presidential "mixed marriage" — he was a Sephardic, or Middle Eastern Jew, she was born to Ashkenazi, or Eastern European, parents.

That mix, and the fact that they were the first to bring small children to the first family, made them symbol of the new Israel.

There were other contrasts: He was the phlegmatic establishment politician; she was an outspoken career woman; he was the son of a family that had lived in Jerusalem for years; she was a child of the new city of Tel Aviv.

After his presidency, Mr. Navon served as education minister from 1984-1991. Mrs. Navon, stung by press criticism of her outspokenness, receded from the public eye but remained a volunteer for her favourite causes.

Mrs. Navon, survived by her husband, her daughter Naama, 20, and her son, Erez, 19, was to be buried Monday, Israel Radio said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Nighttime bomb in Tehran injures four

NICOSIA (AP) — A bomb exploded before dawn Monday in the Iranian capital of Tehran, injuring four people, damaging cars and shattering windows, the national news agency IRNA said. The brief dispatch, monitored in Nicosia, said the bomb was planted in a car in the southern part of the city. The report gave few details, but did not say how serious the injuries were or who may have been responsible for the attack. However, the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq, an Iranian opposition group based in Iraq, has claimed numerous attacks inside Iran this year. Also, tensions between Iran and Iraq, combatants in a brutal war from 1980-88, have been running high in recent months.

Somalis end protest at conditions in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — Hundreds of Somali refugees staging a protest at the U.N. offices in Cairo to demand more aid agreed to end their action on Sunday after Egyptian diplomats intervened. About 400 Somalis occupied the gardens of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Cairo. Some were there for five days and were on hunger strike. The Somalis agreed to stop their protest when an Egyptian diplomat, a UNHCR officer, and a Somali representative agreed they would visit the charity Caritas which is due to give them money. Their leader Basha Ahmad Abdi told Reuters the UNHCR had decided to give each family 350 Egyptian pounds (\$100) per month and each single person 100 Egyptian pounds (\$30). Both figures were much lower than those given to Somali refugees in other countries, Mr. Abdi said. But UNHCR officer Bhairija Panday said no sum had been fixed and each case would be treated on its individual merits. About 7,000 Somalis in Egypt receive refugee help.

2 held for smuggling drug into Israeli jail

TEL AVIV (AP) — Two men found out heroin does not go better with coke when they were charged Sunday with smuggling the white powder into jail in a soft drink bottle, Israel Radio reported. An alert policeman heard Avraham Maman and Yisrael Cohen shout out, "It's okay, it's in the coke," as they ended a visit with friends in the lockup in Rishon LeZion, a Tel Aviv suburb, the radio said. The policeman checked out the bottle, the report said, found 26 grammes of heroin, and marched the two back into the lockup for a taste of the real thing. The Petach Tikva magistrate's court detained the two on charges of drug possession Sunday, the radio said.

Israeli police catch four escapees

TEL AVIV (AP) — Police nabbed three of four prisoners Sunday who had escaped the Tel Aviv district prison the night before, Israel Radio reported. The four had escaped when the ringleader, a former police informer, held up a guard at gunpoint and released the other three Saturday night. The escapees were caught in Jaffa, south of Tel Aviv, when a police blockade stopped them after they had careened around Tel Aviv in a stolen car, the radio said. All four attempted to escape on foot, but only one, Kaddafi Bairi from Jaffa, got away. Police recovered the .22 caliber pistol the ringleader had used to help his friends escape when they caught the three, the radio said. They were investigating how he had obtained the gun. All four — two Arab Israelis from Jaffa and two Palestinians from East Jerusalem — were in prison on criminal charges. Mr. Bairi, 18, was in jail for car theft.

8 killed in Iran coal mine blast

NICOSIA (R) — Eight coalminers were killed and about a dozen were missing after an explosion at a state-owned mine in southeast Iran, an Iranian official said Monday. An official of the Mines and Metals Ministry said rescue teams had recovered eight bodies after part of Babazon mine near the town of Zaran, 720 kilometres southeast of Tehran, collapsed when a pocket of methane gas exploded on Thursday. They were searching for about a dozen others they hoped would still be alive in the tunnels at the "relatively large" mine, he told Reuters by telephone from Tehran. Tehran's Salam newspaper said 18 miners injured in the blast were being treated in hospitals at the nearby provincial capital of Kerman. The official said the ministry had sent a team of experts to investigate the cause of the blast at the mine, run by the state-owned Kerman Coal Company.

Russian pilot commits suicide in Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — A Russian airline pilot has committed suicide by jumping out his hotel window in northwestern Iran, an Iranian newspaper reported Monday. The Farsi-language Salam said the 30-year-old pilot, identified as Anatoly Kopolin, killed himself Thursday by jumping out of his room, at the Jasm Hotel in Mashhad, capital of Iran's northeastern Khorasan province. The report, received in Nicosia, said the motive was not known. It did not say for which airline Kopolin worked. Kopolin's body was flown to Russia, it added. Several airlines from the Commonwealth of Independent States have scheduled flights to Mashhad.

Kuwait says Indian labour row solved

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwait Foreign Ministry official said on Monday a row involving 130 Indian workers and a private manpower firm over contract terms had been solved. Jasssem Sabagh, director of the ministry's Asia and Africa's Department, said the workers, who complained they had been paid about half the \$45 (dinar) per month salary stipulated in their contracts, would be paid in full. He said the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour would ensure the workers received their full pay as cleaners and loaders of vegetable market trucks for Al Nibras Stevedoring and Cleaning Company. "Kuwait will keep respecting the rights of workers as it always did," Mr. Sabagh told Reuters by telephone. An Indian embassy official told the manpower company would start repatriating the workers in groups later this week. Diplomats said the workers had taken refuge at the Indian embassy last week for fear of violence after some alleged they were assaulted by Kuwaiti police during a labour dispute. The workers also said the company had not honoured an undertaking to pay for end-of-contract flights home.

Morocco builds new wonder of the world of Islam

By Ali Bouzerda
Reuters

CASABLANCA, Morocco — A modern wonder of the world of Islam, it is designed to give worshippers the feeling that their place of prayer is floating on water.

To top that, its minaret reaches taller than any other in the world.

Now, after six years of round-the-clock working, King Hassan Two mosque on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, is finally complete.

"Apart from Mecca and the Prophet Mohammad's mosque in Medina, it will be the biggest in the Islamic World and a best bestowed upon all Moroccans," King Hassan said in an appeal for public donations for the mosque five years ago.

On Aug. 30, he will realise his dream when he inaugurates the huge mosque in time for the Prophet's birthday.

King Hassan Two mosque, which combines high-tech with ornate Muslim tradition,

towers over the historic city of Casablanca.

King Hassan decided to build the mosque in memory of his father Mohammed V who died in Casablanca in 1961 but is buried in the capital Rabat.

Elio Riello, assistant to French architect Michel Pinseau, says its location is no accident.

"Its geographical setting was important as the mosque is the last or the first rampart on the land of Islam, whether you come from the East or the West."

The waves of the Atlantic — up to 10 metres high — break against massive supports which protect the ground on which the mosque sits, giving the faithful the impression, while praying, that the great mosque is floating on water.

Officials say the king wanted it that way because the Koran refers to Allah's "throne over the water."

Designed by Michel Pinseau, a personal friend of the king, the mosque can

accommodate 25,000 worshippers inside its main hall. A wide polished marble esplanade around the mosque can accommodate a further 75,000 worshippers.

"The whole of St. Peter's in Rome could fit inside the main building," one French architect said. "The minaret will be higher than the Great Pyramid Of Cheops," he added.

The ceiling, at its point, rises 65 metres above the floor.

The white and green minaret rises 200 metres. A laser on the top projects a 30 kilometres beam east at night to show the way to the Holy City of Mecca.

A mechanically-operated roof opens in three minutes to transform the hall into an open-air assembly area.

More than 10,000 craftsmen have decorated the interior of the mosque with mosaics and cedarwood ceiling carvings. Some are embellished with gold leaf. A total of 2,500 pillars support the highly decorated

ceiling of the main hall.

Fifty huge candelabras of venetian crystal, each weighing over a tonne, hang from the ceiling.

Hand made plaster stucco and geometric designs adorn the enormous central prayer room.

There are 124 fountains spouting water night and day for ritual washing underneath it.

The mosque has two huge mezzanines reserved for women and two steam baths — one for men and one for women.

A modern library, a religious school in adjacent buildings and parking space for more than 1,000 cars make up the complex.

The French company Bouygues began work on the main building on Aug. 11, 1987.

The mosque is one of the most ambitious civilian construction projects undertaken in Morocco, a country of 26 million people, since independence in 1956.

It is also one of the most expensive.

King Hassan launched a public subscription which raised more than three billion dirhams (\$320 million) by the end of 1990. The \$13 million contributors included 40,000 foreigners.

The Moroccan monarch contributed 6.8 million dirhams (\$800,000).

Officials have not revealed the final cost but experts estimate it could reach \$500 million.

Moroccan officials portray the mosque as a symbol of tolerance.

"The Hassan Two mosque is the mirror of tolerant Islam," Interior and Information Minister Driss Bassi said.

Asked about the mosque, Abdul Salam Yassin, 66, spiritual leader of the outlawed Al Adl Wal Ihsane (Justice and Charity) group, said:

"They say it's the biggest in the world. We are pleased to have it. We would like to be able to preach and pray there, if ever they let us."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-15

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Omnisciences
18:30 A Comedy Series
19:00 News in French
19:15 Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
21:30 People Next Door
21:40 Faces and Places
22:00 A Kind of Magic
22:30 News in English
22:30 Feature Film: White Heat

PRAYER TIMES

04:38 Fajr
06:01 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:30 Asr
16:16 Maghrob
19:17 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swallow, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 641757
Terresanta Church Tel. 623366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 771331
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824326
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be relatively hot and winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Agaba winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 21 / 34
Agaba 26 / 39
Djordan 20 / 38
Jordan Valley 25 / 39
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 33, Agaba 37. Humidity readings: Amman 21 per cent, Agaba 38 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ghazi Abu Shikha 752504
Dr. Yousef Al Fiqhi 756980
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 825880
Dr. Salaman Al Daboubi 846070
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairook pharmacy 626772
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 649495
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairook pharmacy 626372
Najib pharmacy 847632

DRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Zoubi (-)
Alquds pharmacy (-)
ZARQA:
Dr. Ahmad Al Tarifi 900806
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdall Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Ann 642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 661711/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musader Hospital 667277/9
The Islamic, Abdall 666127/37
Al-Abil, Abdall 661616/6
Italian, Al-Muhajroon 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marika 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 686100
Al-Hikam Modern Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Hikam Modern Hospital (09)990990
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al-Nafes Hospital (02)347110
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)311111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:30 Dhahran (RJ)
09:45 Agaba (RJ)
10:30 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:00 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
12:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
17:35 London (RJ)
17:35 Frankfurt (RJ)
18:00 Vienna (RJ)
18:30 Chicago/Amsterdam (RJ)
20:50 Frankfurt (RJ)
01:30 Montreal (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:30 Agaba (RJ)
12:00 Damascus (RJ)
12:45 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:50 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
13:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
13:45 Cairo (RJ)
13:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
13:55 London (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:15 Athens (RJ)
22:45 Colombo, Singapore (RJ)
23:00 Dubai (RJ)
01:50 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

08:15 Beirut (ME)
12:15 Vienna (OS)
14:30 Cairo (MS)
14:30 Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
15:30 Riyadh (SU)
17:45 Dubai (AZ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg

Apples 700/900
Apricots 440/340
Bananas 550/450
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Beans 350 / 250
Cabbage 200 / 100
Carrot 300/250
Cauliflower 200 / 50
Cucumbers (large) 350 / 250
Cucumbers (small) 350 / 250
Eggplant 170 / 100
Fig 400 / 300
Garlic 750 / 500
Grapes 300/200
Gruva 300/200
L



Senior officers of the Royal War College Monday attend a lecture delivered by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali.

Premier reviews government stands in lecture at Royal War College

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Monday delivered a lecture at the Royal War College in which he reaffirmed Jordan's stands with regard to the Middle East peace process, noting that Jordan was providing an umbrella for the Palestinians in the peace negotiations.

Stating that the coming elections will be free and fair, the prime minister pledged government action to ensure that the parliamentary elections are held in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy.

With reference to its economic policy, Dr. Majali said that the

government was seeking to encourage the private sector to assume its full role in contributing to the Jordanian economy and was encouraging investments by Jordanians and external concerns.

He said the government plans to set up an institution to cater to the needs of the Jordanian workforce.

Referring to public administration, Dr. Majali said the government was working towards decentralisation in management and has already given provincial governors partial ministerial authority and power to speed up govern-

ment work in their respective areas.

On relations with other Arab countries, the premier said Jordan has always sought to improve its ties with the other Arab countries.

Noting that Jordan was extending a friendly hand and an open heart to the Arab Nation, the prime minister said that the Kingdom seeks to unify the Arab stand vis-à-vis the new world order so that nothing can be imposed on the Arabs against their will.

Attending Monday's lecture were senior army officers.

Scholars to discuss Muslims and the minorities of Europe

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Arab Thought Forum (ATF) has invited scholars from Europe and the Islamic World to hold a two-day Arab-European dialogue concerning "Muslims and the minorities of Europe" in Amman on Sept. 1 and 2.

The announcement, made by the ATF Monday, said that the meeting will be the fifth session of Arab-European dialogue and will be held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan who is the ATF president.

It said that the participants, who will be holding their meeting at the Forte Grand Hotel in Amman, will discuss the following topics: the current problems of immigration, causes of fundamentalism in Arab countries, the extremist right wing movements, Muslims in Europe and their future, and human rights in Arab-European relations.

19-year-old hanged for murder of relative

AMMAN (API) — A 19-year-old has been hanged for stabbing to death a relative in what appeared to be a contract killing, a security official said.

The youth, identified only as Munther S., was hanged Sunday at the Suwayda prison, 100 kilometres south of Amman, said the official, who requested anonymity.

Munther's cousin agreed to pay him JD2,000 if he killed her husband, who refused to grant a divorce, the official said, citing court evidence.

The killing took place at Aujan, a town 20 kilometres north of Amman, in July 1992.

The unidentified woman was sentenced to 20 years with hard labour. Her daughter and another person were convicted as accomplices and received prison terms of 15 years and 12 years, the official added.

Majali reiterates Jordan's support of Palestinian peace negotiators

5 Palestinian sub-committees formed for higher joint panel meetings soon

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Monday reiterated Jordan's continued support of the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace talks noting that the Kingdom seeks a settlement on all the Arab-Israeli tracks.

Speaking at a meeting with a delegation representing the Palestinian People's Party, the prime minister called for further coordination among the members of the Palestinian delegation, noting that united ranks can help them to regain their rights and bolster the Arab negotiators' stand.

The delegation leader, Bashir Barghouti, voiced his party's support for continued Jordanian-Palestinian coordination within the peace process framework and for defining the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship after the Palestinians have regained their right to self-determination.

The two sides reviewed the Israeli-Palestinian talks and other matters related to the progress of the peace negotiations, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Petra said the two sides also discussed the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship.

Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani and members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations Ghassan Al Khatib, Suleiman Al Najjab and Tayseer Al Arouri were present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, Palestinian sources



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Monday meets with a delegation of the Palestinian People's Party to review issues related to the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. Attending the meeting were Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad

Al Anani (left), delegation leader Bashir Barghouti (third from left) and Palestinian peace negotiators Ghassan Al Khatib, Suleiman Al Najjab and Tayseer Al Arouri (Petra photo)

were quoted by Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday as saying that the Palestinians have finalised the formation of such committees which will be holding meetings with Jordanian sub-committees under the umbrella of the Jordanian-Palestinian higher joint committee formed last month.

The sources said the Palestinian side to the refugee committee will be led by Samir Ghosheh, the water and Jerusalem committee, by Mohammad Nashashibi, the security and border committee by Yasser Amr, the cultural and information committee by Yasser Abed Rabbo economic committee by Suleiman Al Naj-

jab. According to the sources, the Joint committees which had held initial meetings last month will resume their talks in Amman in the coming few days.

The committees have been entrusted with the task of discussing the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship.

Ministerial visit to Tafileh focuses on governorate's needs

TAFILEH (Petra) — The government is proceeding with plans to decentralise, and programmes have been designed for each governorate in this respect, said Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz.

Speaking during a visit to Tafileh with the Ministers of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment, Public Works and Housing and Social Development, Dr. Fariz cited as an example plans for every governorate's fiscal budget for 1994 in a manner that would ensure justice and provide budget for 1994 in a manner that would ensure justice and provide appropriate services to citizens.

The ministers' visit to the southern governorate Monday, said Dr. Fariz, aims at paving the way for a study of its problems. "The ministers are here for a close hand study of the governor-

ate's problems so that these will be considered in the fiscal budget for 1994," said Dr. Fariz.

The planning minister urged the private sector to participate in the efforts towards developing the governorate through investment projects that can raise the living standards of local residents.

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Mohammad Mahdi Al Farhan said at the meeting, which was attended by heads of local councils and notable citizens, that all requests related to city planning and the distribution of land will be taken into account and discussed by the provincial governors together with the heads of local councils.

Minister of Public Works Khalaf Hawari said that the ministry was going ahead with plans to meet citizens' requests for agricultural roads. He said that sufficient allocations will be made in the 1994 budget for these projects.

Minister of Social Development Mohammad Al Sqaor told the meeting that the ministry was cooperating with the local councils to improve social services. He said local citizens would be encouraged to carry out small-scale income-generating projects and to help increase their incomes.

Tafileh Governor Ahmad Lawzi reviewed the governorate's needs for roads and maintenance of tourism attractions like the Afra baths. He also said the town councils were in need of engineers and technicians, and certain areas still lack industrial zones.

The ministers visited several projects in the region as well as the Dana Wildlife Reserve.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Ukraine

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday sent a cable to the president of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, congratulating him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people and government on his country's national day. The King wished Mr. Kravchuk continued health and happiness and the people of Ukraine further progress and prosperity.

Minister, Turkish envoy review religious affairs

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Religious Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abbadi received in his office Turkish Ambassador to Jordan Mehmet Ali Iremcelik. Mr. Abbadi and Mr. Iremcelik discussed means of enhancing Jordanian-Turkish cooperation in religious affairs.

Labour delegation heads for Indonesia

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Khaled Al Ghazawi left Amman Monday at the head of a Jordanian delegation to Indonesia. In a four-day meeting there, the minister will hold talks with the Indonesian ministers of labour and industry on labour-related fields. Issues ranging from control of the labour market and vocational training, to occupational safety procedures will be reviewed in the talks. Mr. Ghazawi is accompanied on the visit by Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) Director General Ahmad Atwan and the ministry of labour's advisor, Ayoub Bataineh.

Truck drivers demand special parking lot

AOABA (Petra) — Truck drivers operating between Aqaba and other cities have complained to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that there are no special lots assigned where they can park their vehicles during the discharge and load-up periods in Aqaba. They said that this situation forces them to park alongside the roads next to the containers port. The drivers requested that the concerned authorities help them get a parking lot in order to avoid being fined by traffic police for violations of traffic rules.

Firms to display goods at Damascus fair

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the Damascus International Fair due to open Saturday for two weeks. A spokesman for the Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCO) said 76 Jordanian industrial firms will take part in the fair, displaying samples of their nationally manufactured products. It said Industry and Trade Minister Bassam Al Saket will arrive in Damascus Saturday to attend the opening of the fair.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

☆ Exhibition of paintings by 25 Jordanian artists at the Housing Bank exhibition hall.

☆ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Eshbilia Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre. The paintings depict Jordanian-Palestinian heritage, Jordanian antiquities, Arab Jerusalem, rural life and natural scenery.

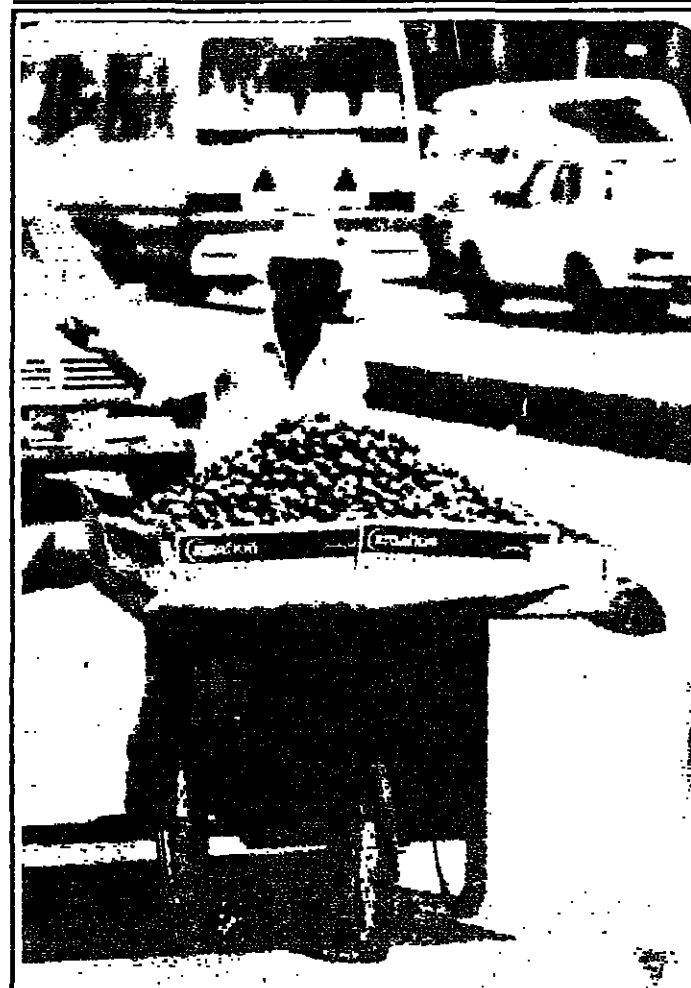
LECTURES

☆ Lecture by Dr. Martha Joukowsky on "Excavations at the Southern Temple of Petra" at the American Centre of Oriental Research (ACOR) at 7:00 p.m.

PLAYS

☆ Play entitled "Crescent Night" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

☆ Play entitled "Samira and the Princess" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.



PLUM-FULL: A fruit vendor braves Amman traffic to sell fresh plums (Staff photo by Aynsley Floyd)

Visiting labour panel opens local dialogue

AMMAN (Petra) — An official representing the Asian-American Free Labour Institute (AFLI) in the United States Monday opened a three-day dialogue on labour-related issues with the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU).

A FJLU statement said the dialogue between John Sloane and the federation's executive bureau focuses on the Jordanian labour movement and its problems.

The two sides will also review national and pan-Arab issues directly related to labour unions, according to the statement.

Such issues as labour disputes, selection of union leaders, representation of unions in general meetings, workers' needs and rights are to be reviewed in the three-day meetings.

According to the statement the AFLI is part of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

Established in 1986, the AFLI now has offices in Indonesia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Turkey.

The statement said that the AFLI regularly holds training seminars for labour union leaders.

Customs department collects JD 328.5m in 7 months

AMMAN (Petra) — The Customs Department Monday announced that it collected JD 328,513,583 in the first seven months of 1993, up from JD 285,727,282 in the same period of 1992.

The revenues mark an increase of JD31,810,155 (16 per cent) over estimates in the 1993 fiscal budget, noted the announcement.

Customs Department Director General Mohammad Al Jamal said that duty collected in 1992

amounted to JD 586,116,633 levied on incoming goods, consumption tax, fines and other fees.

"On the whole, the department imposes high customs duty on non-essential products and low-rate duty on the basic commodities and essential products," said Mr. Jamal.

He noted that commodities related to health and medication, as well as those used in training Jordanians in various trades are

subject to very low rates.

He said customs duty constitutes the main source of public revenues in Jordan adding that it is imposed partly as a measure to protect national products against foreign competition and to encourage local industries.

In a drive to decentralise its various tasks Mr. Jamal said, the department has granted additional authorities to customs centres at the borders, especially in preventing smuggling.

U.N. talks

(Continued from page 1)

struck during the visit by Mr. Rolf Ekeus, head of the special commission, to Baghdad in July, the technical talks will start in New York on August 31," the statement said.

It said the talks would cover "outstanding technical problems related to the weapons section of Resolution 687."

Security Council Resolution 687 is the main Gulf war ceasefire resolution under which Baghdad is compelled to give up weapons of mass destruction and the means to produce them.

"They (the talks) will tackle a discussion of means to apply 715 in the light of the position paper the Iraqi side submitted to Rolf Ekeus," the source added.

Resolution 715 outlines U.N. measures to monitor Baghdad's weapons programmes and make sure that banned activities do not take place in the future.

Iraq accepted 715 in principle last month after stalling on it for more than a year.

The source said Iraq said in its position paper that the Security Council should "honour its commitments towards Iraq, especially the removal of the unjust embargo against it."

The source made no mention of talks allowing Baghdad partial oil sales. These talks were suspended on July 14.

But it said that according to the agreement with Mr. Ekeus "political and technical talks will follow the first stage to start in New York Aug. 31."

Committee to discuss PLO crisis

(Continued from page 1)

deepened in light of the leadership's attempt to buy political allegiances," he said, adding that the spate of resignations was aimed at PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and his negotiating team at the peace talks "who ran the show with unprecedented incompetence."

Earlier, Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi attributed the Executive Committee's crisis to two factors: "The PLO's economic crisis...and the peace process, which is not progressing."

Also in Lebanon, a top PLO military official called Monday for Mr. Arafat to resign.

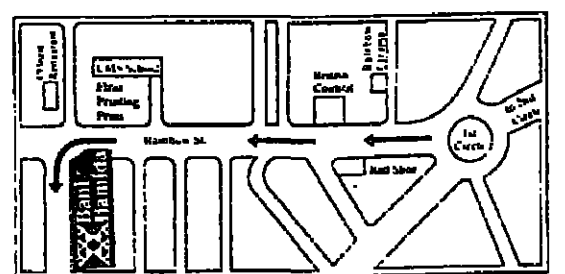
Dr. Ashrawi, warning the PLO's cash crisis could lead to Palestinian institutions in the Israeli-occupied territories and abroad going bankrupt, said the impasse in the peace talks was due to the Jerusalem question, which has created a rift in the organisation.

END OF SUMMER SALE

at

THE BANI HAMIDA HOUSE

Thursday, Aug. 26 till Sunday Aug. 29
From 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. daily



Tel.: 658696/658697

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1975

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Onus on other side

WILL THE upcoming 11th round of Arab-Israeli negotiations in Washington produce a breakthrough or at least achieve some solid progress towards peace? Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali told the Jordan Television on Sunday that he was upbeat about the prospects of attaining real progress in the next session of talks planned for the end of this month. "I am very optimistic," the prime minister said. The reason for this optimism, in the words of Dr. Majali, is American assurances that the U.S. now wants "to see concrete progress before the end of this year." Expressing similar anticipation of tangible advancement in the peace talks is Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. "We are really very near in time, in content, and I think it (peace agreement) will come earlier than most people think," Mr. Peres declared Sunday in Helsinki. Syrian President Hafez Al Assad expressed almost identical views a few days ago when he described Washington's current involvement in the peace discussions as more forthright and positive than at any previous time.

The Palestinian side has yet to share this assessment, basically because their track is the most formidable and thorny of all the existing bilateral peace talks. The fact that the Palestinian house is woefully divided has not helped matters much either. Shafiq Al Hout, member of the PLO's Executive Committee, declared Sunday the suspension of his membership for alleged irregularities in the organisation's hierarchy. This move came on the heels of the resignation of Mahmoud Darwish from the same committee apparently for the same reasons offered by Mr. Hout. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had barely recovered from the confrontation with the Palestinian team to the Israeli-Palestinian track when these developments took place, and he will also continue to be plagued by the serious financial constraints that the PLO budget is suffering from. All these complications on the Palestinian front are obviously making decision making difficult and cumbersome for the Palestinian side.

Still the key to progress or lack of it lies with Israel itself, not with Washington or the PLO or the other Arab parties. The sooner that the Rabin government reconciles itself with the inevitability of dealing directly with the PLO the sooner progress can be achieved on the Palestinian-Israeli track. Israel has been inching closer to recognising the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people but is doing so painstakingly. Further movement in that direction would undoubtedly make things easier for the Palestinian side. Given the solemn commitment by Jordan, Syria and Lebanon against signing separate peace accords with Israel, the Israeli government thus holds the key to progress on these other Arab fronts by negotiating more effectively with the Palestinian party. This could not be done without accepting the PLO as a full partner in the peace process.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE MEETINGS of His Majesty King Hussein and the prime minister with the representatives of the media in the past week reflected the importance which the country attaches to the press and the information services, said Al Dustour daily Monday. There is no doubt that the media industry has made major strides over the past few years, serving as a tool for monitoring or criticising policies, actions and behaviours of the public and private institutions, said the paper. Indeed, the efficient journalists and the developed media of Jordan represent an economic asset for the country and a source of pride for Jordanians, it added. For this reason, it said, it has become necessary for the government to set guidelines for the media with the purpose of benefiting from its role in the interest of the nation. The guidelines came frankly and openly from the government and the King, added the paper. The King's meeting with the press reflected the leader's determination to maintain a constructive dialogue with the journalists over all matters of concern to the nation, the paper continued. Both the King and the prime minister are underlining the fact that the media has assumed a major status and is playing a leading role not only in manifesting and projecting the country's achievements on all fronts, but also in influencing the public opinion, added the paper.

THE CURRENT troubled spots around the world and the various regional conflicts we witness nowadays have resulted from the downfall of the old world order, when the Soviet Union collapsed, said Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily Monday. The writer said that the collapse of the Soviet Union allowed the United States to remain the sole superpower, capable of imposing its will on the world and causing these conflicts and wars. The writer said that the world could have achieved a new world order, despite the continued existence of the Soviet Union, through gradual disarmament and the dissolution of the NATO and Warsaw alliances. The world could have tasted peace and security under the umbrella of a new world order, had Moscow and Washington cooperated in resolving the conflicts in Afghanistan, Cambodia and the Middle East, the writer added. It should be added, said the writer, that the success of the United States in rallying the world against Iraq in the Gulf war has enhanced its position in the post cold war era. But, he noted, the success of the United States is allowed to continue as long as the Gulf countries continue to bank roll Washington's military adventures. The writer said that no power in the world is capable at present to halt the American arrogance and its greed for power and so, he said, the only means of dealing with the Americans is by diluting their power by involving them more and more in world conflicts so as to exhaust their resources and pave the ground for the ordinary American citizens and tax payers to put an end to such adventures.

The View from Fourth Circle

New visions vs. desperate deeds of discredited old men

The peculiar public controversy over the changes in the electoral law that ushered in a one-person, one-vote system reveals a great deal about the state of Jordanian political culture, and, by extension, about the general political malaise in the Arab World. This highlights some of our deficiencies in the short run, for it affirms that the ways of the past are no longer valid; but in a longer term perspective, it signals an important willingness to build a better future, by coming to terms with our accumulated, structural political weaknesses.

The adoption of the one-person, one-vote system was a good and necessary change, but the manner in which the change was made was not in keeping with the proto-democratic Jordanian and Arab impulses of our time. The credibility of the prime minister and his government, in particular, was damaged because the prime minister had personally told the speaker of Parliament about a month ago that any changes in the law would take place only after a thorough national debate among all political tendencies in the country.

The prime minister's explanation after the fact that His Majesty the King and the government had consulted the different political forces in Jordan before approving the temporary law may be factually correct, but politically it remains open to discussion about its appropriateness. Was this the most suitable way to change the law, or should the government have engaged the public in a more open discussion of the pros and cons of the changes?

One of the cardinal attributes of democracy is that important national decisions are made in public, with all interested parties contributing to the debate. The government's decision to change the law without a public political debate in Parliament or through other systematic means will be seen as a small step back towards the closed politics of the mid-20th century, at a time when the country and the people are striving for the open politics that must usher in the start of the 21st century.

These points relate to the process of political transformation and the manner in which decisions are taken. The substance of our political transformation, however, as manifested in the new electoral law, is another matter. Clearly, the law had to be changed because the old system was antiquated and unfair.

The vehement opposition to the one-person, one-vote system is

very telling, because the opposition has come mainly from established politicians who gained from the old system, and who stand to lose from the new system. Grassroots opposition to the changes are rather mild, for three reasons: Most people are not deeply involved in the process of electoral politics, most of the politicians opposing the changes have little credibility with ordinary people, and the fact that King Hussein personally approved the changes and explained them in his television speech leads most people to accept them without serious questioning.

It is interesting that the strongest opposition comes from politicians on the right and left of the political spectrum. I suspect this is because these folks are precisely the ones who have the most to lose from a new system in which voters have to make their electoral decisions on the basis of practical political programmes and the capacity of politicians to deliver to their constituencies, rather than on the old basis of personal ties, tribal affiliations and emotional sentiments.

In time, I suspect it will become clear that the advantage of the one-person, one-vote system is that it will force more and more voters to think carefully before casting their vote. It is inevitable that tribal/personal/emotional factors will slowly diminish as determinants of people's votes; instead, the ability of politicians to respond to people's real needs and concerns will become the important factors in how voters choose their representatives.

The new electoral law represents an important turning point in our modern political culture, especially as it follows the formation of some 20 political parties in the country. The combination of these two factors will force the start of a process that is vital for the development of a serious democratic system — the process of political accountability. While many voters will still choose their MPs on the basis of tribal/personal/emotional criteria, the parliamentary elections this autumn should see the start of an accountability dynamic by which candidates try to respond to voters' real life concerns and needs, especially in the economic sphere.

This shift from a traditional/tribal political culture to a more modern/pragmatic, issues-oriented political culture will take place over a period of many decades, and several generations. The central element in political governance is how well the political decision-making process responds to people's real life needs and

aspirations. The old slogans and the tribal affiliations that have defined Jordanian and Arab politics for many decades have frayed badly; today, they no longer sufficiently respond to the people's basic life needs in a context of rising economic and social pressures, in Jordan as throughout the Arab World. A new form of political governance is required to address the challenges of the decade and the early years of the next decade. That form will have to be built on the participatory and accountability principles that have now started to define our new political culture, as represented by organised parties that must respond to people's needs and an electoral system that compels people to choose their MPs with care.

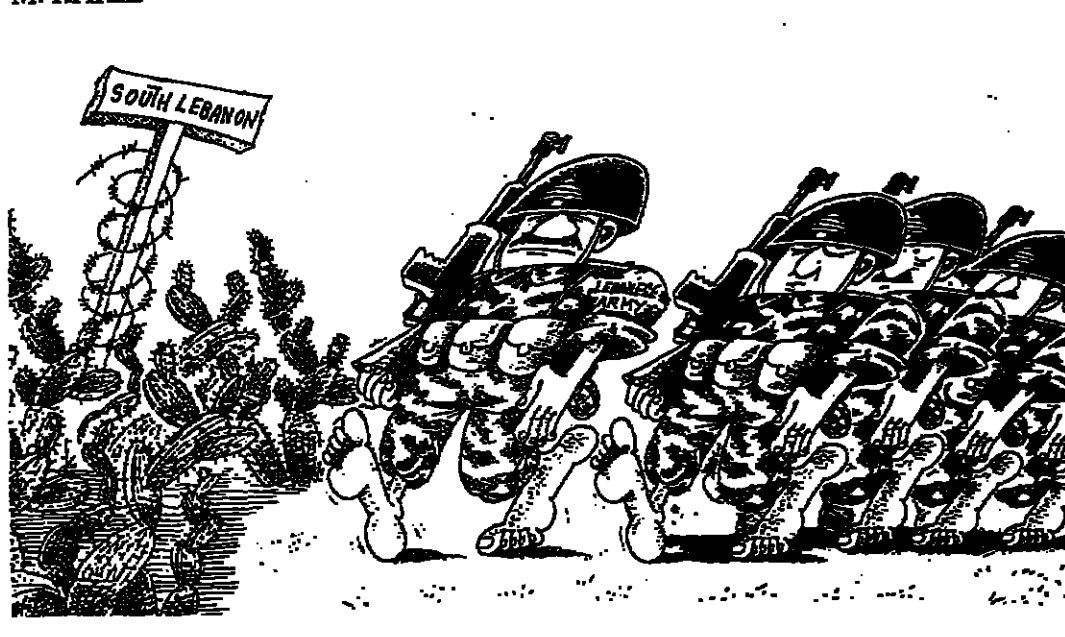
The political elite's opposition to the new electoral law hides a deeper reality that defines most of the Arab World. Simply put, the political power structures and the men that have dominated Arab governance for most of this century have limped into the mid-1990s with an almost total lack of credibility. This is most obvious in Jordan in the form of the old men who are vainly trying to use the advent of political parties to maintain their grip on power. The fellows who most vehemently oppose the new electoral law are the same ones who are desperately trying to figure out why the public is largely ignoring their new political parties.

In brief, most of the old men of Jordanian and Arab politics are largely discredited. They are suffering from an acute crisis of ability, confidence, credibility and legitimacy. Many of them have tried to use political parties to camouflage their failures, irrelevance and inadequacies, but the public is not fooled.

Whether from the right, centre or left, the old guard recognises that their former ways are neither convincing nor sustainable and therefore they would like to preserve the tribal/emotional mode of electoral politics as a last, desperate means of retaining power. It is not working, and it will not work, because the basic intelligence and rationality of the people, coupled with the humanitarian vision and historical perceptions of our top leadership, will force the country to rise to a higher, more responsive, level of political governance.

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M. KAHIL



Lebanon accord paves way for talks and violence

By Bradley Burston
Reuter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — A U.S.-brokered ceasefire that ended Israel's blitz against Arab guerrillas last month appears to have ensured that Middle East peace talks will go on but so will South Lebanon's cycle of bloodshed.

Details of the unwritten accord have never been spelled out. But after nine Israeli soldiers were killed in guerrilla bombings in South Lebanon on Thursday, Israeli leaders lined up to say the attacks did not violate the terms of the ceasefire.

"It wasn't a breach of the agreement, it was a breach of peace," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said of the attacks, the deadliest in one day on Israeli soldiers since the Jewish state declared its "security zone" in South Lebanon in 1985.

Mr. Rabin ordered a limited air strike in reprisal and rejected as "the worst thing that could happen" opposition calls to suspend Arab-Israeli peace talks due to resume in Washington on Aug. 31.

Pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrillas fired scores of rockets last month at northern Israeli towns. But most analysts saw Israel's week-long blitz as revenge for the killings of soldiers in the zone.

Israeli and Hizbollah leaders have offered differing interpretations of the truce hammered out with Syria, Lebanon and Israel on the eve of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Middle East visit early this month.

Since the ceasefire was declared on July 31, Mr. Rabin and his aides have backed away from initial statements that the understandings guaranteed freedom of action for Israeli forces and their client South Lebanon Army (SLA) in the zone.

Now their view is more limited. "What we have said (to Hizbollah) is: 'Stop shooting (rockets) over the Galilee and we won't touch you,'" Mr. Peres said on Friday.

Senior aide Oded Ben-Ami said the accord meant the terms of engagement for Israel and Hizbollah had returned to past levels. "Freedom of action" means the army and the SLA are free to

defend themselves in the security zone as they were before the events that led to operation accountability," Mr. Ben-Ami said.

Implicit in Israel's interpretation is that it must limit its response to targeting the perceived source of the violence, directing strikes against guerrilla bases and trying to avoid civilians.

More than 130 people were killed, 200,000 forced to flee, and numerous houses were reduced to rubble during the blitz.

Israeli leaders said they wanted the refugee exodus to put pressure on Beirut and Damascus to curb Hizbollah (Party of God).

Hizbollah has vowed to resume rocket attacks at Israel if again strikes civilian areas. The Lebanese army said guerrillas had a "natural right" to strike at Israeli forces occupying the south.

Mr. Rabin's measured response to last week's attacks earned praise from Israel's closest ally, Washington, which had expressed concern for the human cost of the July blitz in Lebanon.

Israel was apparently looking ahead to the peace talks with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinian representatives.

Hizbollah opposes the talks,

which have ground on with little progress since they began 21 months ago. The parties are supposed to agree to a lasting peace in exchange for a return of Arab land occupied by the Israelis and self-rule for Palestinians.

Mr. Rabin reportedly told Mr. Christopher last week that if Syria, which Israel charges allows arms shipments to reach the guerrillas, did not restrain Hizbollah then Israel would.

"This is a permanent message," Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said on Sunday.

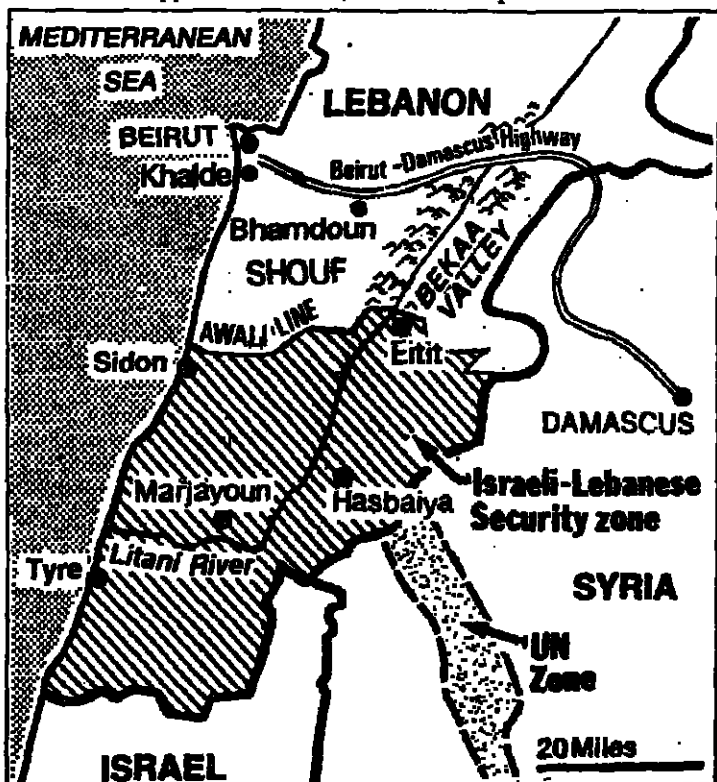
But he added that the demand on Syria was not a precondition to the talks.

Yona Tannenbaum, father of one of the soldiers killed on Thursday, criticised the understanding.

"The accord gives Hizbollah permission to do whatever it wants to Israeli soldiers in the zone as long as one Katyusha does not fall on civilians," he said.

But army chief Ehud Barak offered the view that it was simply back to normal along the most volatile area of Arab-Israeli confrontation.

"We are like boxers in a ring," he said. "One cannot avoid an occasional punch."



Middle Eastern kids in U.S. plant 'seeds of peace'

By Verena Dobnik
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Assaf, a Jewish teenager, lost his father to a bomb planted by Palestinians in the heart of Jerusalem. Fadi, a Palestinian who lives in Jerusalem, has relatives in jail for protesting Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

For three weeks in America, the two boys are among 46 Jews, Muslims and Christians getting together to sow the "seeds of peace."

They arrived in New York last week for the seeds of peace programme, which will also take them to a two-week summer camp in Maine and to Washington, D.C.

The programme's founder, John Wallach, said he is "bringing the next generation together, before they have been poisoned by the hostility of their region."

Can a summer camp in America make a difference?

Fadi, 15, said he has demonstrated against Israeli occupation of Nabulus in the West Bank.

Some of his relatives "got 100-year prison terms," he said in a quiet, resigned voice Saturday.

"We want our land," the tall, dark youth said firmly, adding that "Israel should leave Gaza and the West Bank," which have been occupied by the Jewish state since the 1967 Middle East war.

"But basically, I disagree with both sides doing the killing," he added.

Assaf's father was killed in the 1980s by a bomb planted by Palestinian guerrillas in Jerusalem, said Hadera Rosenblum, a counselor for the Israeli delegation who works for her country's education ministry.

"But he still wants to turn hatred into peace," Ms. Rosenblum said.

The boy's last names were not released. Programme organisers said they want them to speak freely in the United States, without facing anger when they go home.

Terry Anderson, who was held hostage for seven years in Lebanon, told the youths at lunch Friday that as a result of the bonds forged here, the people their parents call enemies "will have a face."

"It's difficult to hate somebody you know," said Mr. Anderson, the former Middle East correspondent for the Associated Press who was held captive in Lebanon for seven years.

"There will be a lot of people pushing at you to continue the road of violence, bitterness, talking about revenge, talking about the wrongs your people have suffered," he warned the children. He urged them to "resist that pressure."

Twenty of the boys are Israelis, including four Arabs — a Druze and three Muslims. Eleven are Palestinians from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and 15 are from Egypt.

After being chosen for the programme, two 14-year-old Arab boys, Iyas and Nidal, invited the other 18 Israelis to a party in their village, Baka Al Garbia, near Hadera in central Israel.

And when the teens gathered in Tel Aviv to go to the United States, Ms. Rosenblum said: "The Arab and Jewish parents

were all hugging and kissing. Their sons were friends, after all."

Tamer, a 13-year-old from Cairo, said the violence in the Middle East is "not our fault." "It's the fault of our great-grandparents," he said. "And we must fix it. We're not old enough yet, but in the future..."

The seeds of peace programme

is funded by private contributions, with participants chosen by the governments of their countries.

This year's programme, the first, is limited to boys because Camp Powhatan in Oxford, Maine, which donated its facilities and staff, is for boys only. Next year, organisers hope to include girls.

LETTERS

No 'minorities' in Jordan

To the Editor:

Referring to your article "Minority votes may scramble strategies with introduction of change into elections" (Jordan Times, Aug. 19/20, 1993) I wish to stress the following:

Your front page bannerhead use of the word "minority" when referring to the Jordanian Christian, Circassian and Chechen citizens is rather provocative and in absolute conflict with the Constitution and the National Charter. As a Jordanian citizen, proud of his identity and belonging to this homeland, I believe that it is sinful to continue to divide the Jordanian people into majority and so-called minority.

The Constitution in its Article 6/1 says "Jordanians shall be equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination between them as regards their rights and duties on grounds of race, language or religion."

The National Charter also says "Jordanian men and women are equal before the law. There is to be no discrimination between them with respect to rights and duties, regardless of race, language, or religion in their practice of constitutional rights and commitment to the supreme interest of the state and the ethics of national action, to ensure that the resources and spiritual and material capabilities of Jordanian society are directed towards achieving the objectives of unity, progress and building the future."

Furthermore, the leader of this homeland, His Majesty the King, misses no single opportunity to state out clearly that all Jordanians are equal, regardless of their roots and origins. His Majesty never used the word "regardless of their religions..."

Dividing the Jordanians into Muslims and Christians, Arabs or Circassians, majority or minority is a scheme that was introduced to our society by the colonialist Sykes-Picot Agreement and the old Ottoman colonialism. Unfortunately, many of our politicians, writers and journalists continue to use this most vicious word, intentionally or unintentionally, regardless of its consequences.

I believe in Jordan, a homeland for all Jordanians, a homeland that does not have any kind of religious or ethnic minorities. Therefore, it is about time we cleanse up our media terminology, our laws and our practices from such despicable words.

Mu'in Kassis,
P.O. Box 3253,
Amman 11181.

Editor's note: True, Jordan's Constitution makes no distinction between Jordanians on the basis of religion or ethnic origin and treats them as equal citizens. Still, the fact remains that there are minorities here, as elsewhere in the world. The best evidence of this are the international norms that define minorities as those nationals of a country that belong to a different religion from the majority religion or belong to an ethnic origin that is also different from that of the majority. Recently, the United Nations committee charged with the mandate of monitoring the application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Jordan had ratified back in 1978, has clearly ruled that the Copts in Egypt constitute a minority in spite of the protestations of the Egyptian delegations that the Copts and Muslims of Egypt are one people and belong to the same nationality and ethnic origin.

Besides, the existence of minorities in any given state does not necessarily lead to disunity or breakup of a country. Recognition of minorities simply means the recognition of their peculiar background with a view to allowing for the expression of such a public affairs. There is nothing despicable or disgraceful about a country recognising the presence of a minority or more. Minorities can enrich countries in many ways, and they certainly promote diversity and culture.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

North African trade has taken root in France

By Sabine Guez



Opening from early morning well into the night, North African grocers in Paris have many faithful customers (WNL photo)

PARIS — Three apples and a pack of coffee land softly in the open plastic bag that Boubaker Cheikh hands gallantly to the lady in a Chanel suit before closing the sale with the Arab blessing "May Allah protect you!"

With a combination of cheerfulness and hard work, Mr. Cheikh seems to have turned the business of grocery trading into more than an expertise, almost an art form. Six days a week, from 8 a.m. till 10 p.m., a wide assortment of the inhabitants of the Odeon area in Paris (close to the student-filled Latin Quarter) descend upon the lively store that he and his brother manage for their father. Grandmothers, aspiring artists, children, art gallery employees, all the regulars know that the Cheikhs will provide them with last minute groceries, an easy laugh, and credit if necessary.

Things have certainly changed in the convenience store business. The French, and particularly the Parisians, would now be at a loss if these "Corner Arabs" as they are called, all of a sudden decided to close shop and go home to Morocco, Tunisia or Algeria. By opening early, closing late, and offering such luxuries as constant affability and free home delivery, they have become indispensable.

Today, two thirds of the Paris area grocers are North Africans and they have spread throughout France, mostly in towns with 5,000 or more inhabitants. And although the economic recession has hurt them too, they manage to survive through sheer hard work and obstinacy.

They mostly arrived in France in the mid-1960s, but they have been traders for centuries: as Mr. Cheikh likes to point out, the Prophet Mohammed was a trader himself. And although they come from different countries, they share the same origin — most of them are part of the Berber group which, despite converting to Islam during the 12th century, has retained its own identity.

Even before they started their emigration to France, they had acquired a quasi monopoly in the grocery trade in North Africa.

According to Abdul Majid Benyounes, secretary general for the Association of Tunisian Merchants in France, there are between 3,000 and 4,000 North African stores in and around Paris. They are small businesses, they rarely occupy more than 120 square metres, and they average yearly sales of about \$200,000. Most of them only employ family members and they keep management expenses to a minimum by relying mostly on themselves or members of their community.

Geographic origin seems to determine who will sell what: The Moroccans come from Sous and hold most of the retail groceries. The Tunisians originate from Jerboa and Ghomrasen and specialise in small restaurants and oriental pastry shops, although a large number of them are now purchasing and expertly remodeling fruit stores. There are many Algerians from the Mzab selling groceries, but Kabyles have mostly chosen to run restaurants or bars.

Thanks to this multitude of small stores, the grocery business has not been overtaken completely by supermarkets. One 27-year-old store owner from Morocco explains: "Of course, I have to compete with the Monoprix supermarket down the street, but they are limited in the scope of what they offer. I have longer

Majid Benyounes: "Most of our members have to make do with sales that are only 60 per cent of the 1985-86 level. Add all the payroll and other fixed charges, and many store-owners end up with something akin to the minimum wage." Despite the fall in income, few have declared bankruptcy: their small size allows them to keep inventory to a minimum, and family members can be more flexible than outside employees. "You know," adds another grocer from Paris, "only Moroccans will agree to work from 8 in the morning to 9 at night." Likewise, their capital often comes mostly from the family back home and delays in repayment can be more easily worked out than they would be with banks. In short, big or small, independent or in partnership, they weather the bad years by working harder and accepting a lower income.

And recently, they have been making efforts to become more competitive. With the help of the Wafabank, Moroccan grocers created a purchasing association, Soframad, in April 1992, which provides technical assistance for new stores and is studying both marketing efforts under a common name and frozen food distribution. Tunisians are working on a similar project. But by far the biggest advantage is the possibility of purchasing through the group's lower rates and escaping the high prices imposed by wholesalers on independent owners. Because, if customers have one complaint about the "Corner Arab," it is the price of his groceries. "They want our quality and services, but at chain store prices!" fulminates another young Moroccan grocer. There is even a suspicion, among French customers hit by the recession, that the "Corner Arab" is getting rich by practicing price gouging on impoverished Parisians.

According to an official of the French Association of Food Retailers who preferred not to be identified, this can be reflected in the rigid attitude of government inspectors towards North African businesses. "Granted, it has taken North Africans time to adjust to some of the French laws, such as the mandatory weekly closing day, but inspectors often prove a lot less flexible with them than with French storekeepers. Personally, I find that some of their actions smack of racism."

That might explain why most Arab storekeepers show no interest in acquiring French nationality. "What for?" asks a young Moroccan. "The French say there are too many immigrants already. To them I will always be an Arab." Besides, most of these workaholics do not intend to finish their life here: there dream is to go back and "start something big." For Mohammed, it might take another four or five years, but by then he will have saved enough to open a jewelry store back home and even invest in real estate.

Talking about "home," Mohammad brightens immediately. "Here, life is kind of tough, everything is expensive. But back home, I have my family, friends all over. You go across the street, or in a bar, you know everybody, you always have a good time. With a little bit of money, you can get everything you need over there, life is wonderful!" — World News Link.

The price of doing business legally

PARIS (WNL) — Some North African grocers are wondering whether the latest right-wing currents in France are going to make it even harder to obtain the "Foreign Merchant Card." Since 1984, immigrants with a residency permit are no longer required to obtain it. However, except for Algerians, immigrants who just have a visitor's permit valid less than 10 years must obtain the special foreign merchant card.

Immigrants must beware that coming as a student or salaried worker won't make it easy to obtain the card. One employee from the Prefecture de Police explained: "They are supposed to make their request through the Chamber of Commerce and then go back to the French consulate in their native country. But frankly, they have to really want it, because I think that the consulates are doing their utmost to discourage them from coming over here."

And another prefecture official noted that the administration's quasi official attitude is that there are "already too many immigrants' stores in France."

Captain of Soviet submarine recounts 1961 disaster

By Matt Bivens

MURMANSK, Russia — When the reactor of a Soviet nuclear submarine suddenly went haywire in 1961, Capt. Nikolai Zateyev spent 22 volunteers to their deaths in a heroic struggle to save the ship.

They saved their sub, and the reactor did not explode. But the radiation made it a nightmare voyage with men dying in agony and begging their shipmates to kill them.

For years Russians knew the story of Capt. Zateyev's submarine only through underground songs. Now he is 67, retired, and ready at last to talk about those sad, romantic verses.

Capt. Zateyev's ship was the first Soviet atomic submarine armed with nuclear warheads. She was named the K-19 but among sailors became known as "Hiroshima."

Before the breakup of the Soviet Union, the K-19's fate was a closely-guarded secret. Western specialists heard rumours but no details until 1991, when Pravda finally confirmed that radiation had killed many of the sub's crew.

Ordinary Russians still know little about the tragedy. Capt. Zateyev has said that a TV documentary was filmed two years ago, but officials deemed it "too upsetting" to be shown.

The stocky, dignified captain and other survivors recounted their story to the Associated Press in interviews this month in Moscow and the northern port of Murmansk.

The K-19 was a major technological advance for the Soviets, and engineers were so eager to launch the sub that they installed no back-up cooling system.

"During the ship's construction, a welder allowed solder to drip onto a pipe carrying coolant to the reactor. The pipe cracked microscopically, like a hot glass dropped into cold water."

On June 4, 1961, the K-19 was hiding in the North Atlantic from Soviet diesel subs during a training exercise. The cracked pipe burst.

In the reactor room, the temperature soared to at least 140 degrees. The gauge went no higher. Radiation also was rising, but the crew could only guess how much.

The reactor had to be cooled. "It would have been Chernobyl. Only 30 years earlier," said crew member Alexander Fateyev, now 56, an official with the Russian Ministry of Energy and himself a retired captain. He said the ship was carrying three nuclear warheads and would have poisoned the sea with radiation if the reactor had burst.

Capt. Zateyev organised three-

man brigades of volunteers to work five to 10 minutes each. Protected only by raincoats and gas masks, they were ordered to weld a new cooling system.

Among the first volunteers was Lt. Boris Korchilov, 20, a blue-eyed ladies' man.

"I accompanied him to the reactor room door — to his death," Capt. Zateyev recalled. "And I said: 'well, Boris, do you know where you're going?' and he said: 'I know, comrade captain.' 'Well, go with God,' I said."

Five minutes later, Korchilov stumbled out of the reactor room, tore off his gas mask and vomited.

"That was the first time I felt: 'yes, this is radiation,'" Capt. Zateyev said.

Of the 139-man crew, 22 died of radiation poisoning — eight within a matter of days, the rest within two years.

"Right on the spot their appearances began changing. Skin not protected by their clothes began to redden, face and hands began to swell. Dots of blood began to appear on their foreheads, under their hair. Within two hours we couldn't recognise them," Capt. Zateyev said.

"People died fully conscious, in terrible pain. They couldn't speak, but they could whisper.

Fisherman's curse falls on the albatross

By Simon Louissou

Reuter

WELLINGTON — If the ancient mariner of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem was so cursed for shooting one albatross, what fate awaits humanity if it wipes out the whole species?

Long-line fishermen are mistakingly killing these magnificent creatures, the largest of all seabirds, in such numbers that they threaten to wipe out some varieties, researchers say.

"If there is nothing done soon then their population will be decimated," said Barry Weeber, researcher at the Royal Bird and Forest Protection Society of New Zealand.

He estimated that 44,000 albatrosses died each year in the southern blue-fin tuna fishery covering mostly the southern ocean and south Indian Ocean.

Fishermen catching the lucrative tuna, which in Japan can fetch over \$5,000 for a single 100 kg fish, are killing albatrosses, petrels, mollymawks and other seabirds as they feed out immense lines up to 130 km long containing more than 2,500 hooks.

Fishing grounds for the migratory tuna, mostly in the Indian Ocean, stretch from the sub-tro-

pical Java Sea to the sub-Antarctic, where the majority of the seabirds are caught.

Estimates of albatross bird numbers are hazy but are estimated at around 200,000 breeding pairs. They mostly breed in the sub-Antarctic islands but also in the north Pacific.

There are only around 10,000 breeding pairs of wandering albatrosses, one of the worst hit species. Wanderers are monogamous, live around 50 years and only produce one egg every two years.

"Because the are such a long lived bird with a low reproductive rate the declines are quite small, but over decades it has a huge impact on their population. Basically their population has halved," Mr. Weeber said.

Museum of New Zealand researcher, Sandy Bartle, who is about to publish his five years of study into the problem, said he had received an unconfirmed report of a vessel returning to port in Tasmania which had caught about 500 birds in three weeks.

"We have another report from Uruguay of 200 albatrosses caught on a single line."

"I think both of these figures are quite believable and highly probable in view of the high capture rates which have been

recorded under exceptional circumstances in New Zealand."

The bird death problem is exacerbated by the fact that many of the deaths occur in international waters and most of the fishing boats come from outside the region. Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, Russia, Ukraine and the United States are the main culprits.

New Zealand fisheries Minister Doug Kidd, who has taken a strong line in New Zealand's huge 320 km economic exclusion zone, believes something must be done quickly and that a practical solution can be found.

"The reported level of albatross and other seabirds deaths is unacceptable. What we have now observed can't be permitted to continue," he told Reuters.

In New Zealand waters, albatrosses were being killed by trailing net monitor cables on Russian squid boats. Mr. Kidd gave a reluctant industry one year to solve the problem, which it did by using electronic devices.

Suggested solutions for the long-liners include using "tori" (Japanese for bird lines) — fluttering plastic streamers towed 150 metres behind boats, using thawed bait which does not float, using weighted hooks and only setting lines at night.

New Zealand, which success-

fully pushed for an international ban on the "wall-of-death" drift net fishing, introduced the bird issue at a recent United Nations conference in New York on international law on the high seas.

"So many nations are so concerned about the degradation of the seas by the distant water fishing nations that something certainly will be done," said Mr. Kidd.

"The sheer necessity is becoming increasingly self-evident. In the case of some species, particularly in the northern hemisphere, it is a race against time whether there is a species to manage any more," he said.

Overfishing exacerbates the bird problem as hungry birds chase the fishing bait for feed. Mr. Kidd said that "ludicrous" subsidised ship building by nations such as Spain were adding to the problems.

"Social economic intervention results in ships being built which ought not to be, which is leading to the collapse of fisheries," he said.

However, after succeeding with the Russian squid boats, he remained optimistic that the albatross killing can be stopped. "If there is enough pressure to stop the problem, people will find appropriate techniques," he said.



Estimates place the number of albatrosses who die yearly, victims of the blue-fin tuna fishing industry, at 44,000 (File photo)

Congress shows Taiwan drifting away from China

By Annie Huang
The Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — For all its talk about reunification with China, Taiwan last week showed how much it is drifting away from the mainland.

At a ruling Nationalist Party Congress, wealthy Taiwan dumped old-guard politicians and strengthened its democracy even as communist China was tossing out a dissident and wrestling to keep its economy under control.

Though officials paid lip service to an eventual merger with China, the party adopted a platform which jettisoned the goal of "recovering the mainland."

Tensions are easing, and trade and cultural exchanges booming between the two Chinas as Taiwan seeks readmission to the United Nations — one more sign of Taiwan's view of itself as a separate state.

Showing its new commitment to democracy, the ruling party for the first time elected a chairman by secret ballot: Lee Teng-Hui, the 70-year-old native-born president.

The party also limited the chairmanship to two four-year terms, a major departure for a country used to leaders who stay in office until death.

And though the week-long congress was marred by occasional fistfights and bribery allegations, it had many of the marks of a western-style party convention. It bore little resemblance to the

scripted ritual of the previous congress, in 1988, when Taiwan had just emerged from 40 years of one-party dictatorship.

The party elected a 210-member policy-making central committee consisting primarily of younger native Taiwanese, showing how power has shifted from the founding "mainlander" generation to the islanders who were long shut out of positions of influence.

The old guard had seen Taiwan's eventual reunion with China as essential.

The mainlanders, who followed the late Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek to Taiwan after losing a civil war to the communist Chinese in 1949, have now faded almost entirely from power.

Not entirely, however. Former Premier Hau Pei-Tsun, 74-year-old leader of the old guard, was elected a vice chairman, backed by rebellious party members who have gained prominence by criticizing government corruption and President Lee's links to big business.

Mr. Lee helped get Mr. Hau elected, demonstrating sensitivity to charges he is dictatorial. Mr. Lee now can say he averted a party split and produced a united front in advance of tough county elections in December.

The nationalists desperately needed to regain credibility and shake off an image of being feudal-ridden and calcified by too many

years in power.

"The old, authoritarian party failed to keep pace with the fast changes in society," said Chuang Shao-Han, a political analyst with close ties to Mr. Lee. "But one big stride was made to transform it into one designed solely for winning elections."

In his opening address, Mr. Lee could not resist comparing the Taiwanese success story to communist China's performance, and indeed the entire world.

"Compared with the gory suppression of the democracy movement by the Chinese communist regime, the economic recession in industrially advanced nations, and the turbulence in the Third World, our outstanding completion of political democratisation...fills us with unbeatable confidence," he said.

Chinese dissident labour activist Han Dongfang was rendered effectively stateless Saturday when Chinese officials revoked his passport for anti-Chinese activities committed abroad. A week earlier Mr. Han, 30, had been forcibly ejected from China by police into British-run Hong

Kong.

China this week ordered an assault on official corruption, linked to western influences and an economy marked by high inflation and easy credit.

Although Mr. Lee's conditions for reunification are so tough that critics say he can't seriously mean them, he bluntly spelled them out again at the congress: China must renounce its "megalomaniacal mentality," embrace democracy and free its markets of state control.

Taiwanese nationalism, once suppressed by law as inconsistent with reunification, was also on display as some delegates insisted on speaking in the Taiwanese language. After heated exchanges, Mr. Lee intervened to establish Mandarin as the congress's official tongue.

"Lee, as a president, must follow the official line of reunification," delegate Steven Chen said in an interview. "But we all know there is but one goal: that communist China should leave us alone so we can live happily on this island."

YWCA CHOIR SINGING

THE YWCA IN AMMAN TAKES PLEASURE IN INVITING MALE & FEMALE SINGERS TO JOIN ITS 4-VOICE CHOIR IN PREPARATION FOR ITS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT THAT WILL BE HELD DEC 9,11,12,13 1993 AT THE R.C.C. PORTIONS OF HANDEL'S MESSIAH WILL BE IN THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM.

INTERESTED (AMATEUR / PROFESSIONAL) SINGERS PLEASE BE AT THE YWCA HALL, 3RD CIRCL, ON TUESDAY AUG 24 FROM 7:30 - 10:00 PM & EVERY TUESDAY THEREAFTER THROUGH DECEMBER. ADDITIONAL REHEARSALS ARE A POSSIBILITY. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS CHORAL EXPERIENCE PLEASE ATTEND THE REHEARSAL ON AUG.24TH. NO MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER SEPT.14TH.

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France continues with cautious rate easing

PARIS — France made its first move to ease its monetary policy in a move that has been seen as a signal that the country is beginning to ease its monetary policy. The move was made by the Bank of France, which has been seen as a signal that the country is beginning to ease its monetary policy.

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Fyodorov says Russia may need higher taxes soon

MOSCOW (R) — Russia may need a supplementary budget soon, raising taxes and curbing subsidies and other spending, Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov has said.

India plans to ease currency regulations

BOMBAY (R) — India is planning further liberalisation of currency regulations after successfully floating the rupee early this year, bankers said.

Now India is opening up its economy and dismantling four decades of socialist-style controls. But Indian importers and exporters continue to be governed by a complex web of exchange rules and directives that even bankers say they cannot always understand.

Senegalese president facing unprecedented economic crisis

DAKAR (R) — Five months after the death of Senegal's president, the country is facing an unprecedented economic crisis. The crisis is the result of a combination of factors, including the death of the president and the resulting political instability.

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Shanghai industry warned of belt-tightening

SHANGHAI (R) — Factories in Shanghai, China's largest industrial city, have been instructed to tighten their belts as national measures to cool an overheated economy take effect, the Shanghai Star reported.

Shanghai's economy, dominated by state-owned enterprises, is being hit by the belt-tightening measures. The city's industry is being hit by the belt-tightening measures, which are aimed at reducing inflation and stabilizing the economy.

Economists say new Japan overseas investment boom unlikely

TOKYO (R) — The soaring yen will eat into Japan's export revenues, but economists said it would not trigger a Japanese spending spree overseas as seen in the 1980s.

Japan's economy is not expected to experience a new overseas investment boom. Economists say that the high yen will lead to a more cautious approach to overseas investment.

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Trains, container fleet boom in Dubai

DUBAI — The United Arab Emirates is experiencing a boom in its container fleet and train services. The boom is the result of a combination of factors, including the growth of the country's economy and the increasing demand for container services.

Dubai's container fleet and train services are booming. The boom is the result of a combination of factors, including the growth of the country's economy and the increasing demand for container services.

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THE BETTER HALF. By Harris

Horoscope not received

THE Daily Crossword by Audrey J. Koch

ACROSS

- 1 Umbrella, in English
- 2 Fragment
- 3 Head cook
- 4 Mother of
- 5 Remus and Remus
- 6 Balf
- 7 Foy
- 8 Judge's seat
- 9 Understands
- 10 Irrate
- 11 Maneuver
- 12 Chest
- 13 Young horse
- 14 Pacific Island
- 15 Rare element
- 16 Land inspector
- 17 Make tardy
- 18 Gay
- 19 Sheep ornament
- 20 Ripening factor
- 21 Cart
- 22 Sound of anguish
- 23 Grown-ups
- 24 Ballet moves
- 25 River to the Seine
- 26 Show blowing
- 27 Caused agony
- 28 College cheer
- 29 Males
- 30 Beach shelter
- 31 Lawyer
- 32 Like a bump
- 33 on
- 34 Gunpowder item
- 35 Architect
- 36 Seamen
- 37 die
- 38 "Parade"
- 39 Expert influence
- 40 Danny or Barry
- 41 Badman
- 42 WWII battle site
- 43 Medicated candy
- 44 Stormy
- 45 Allen or Martin
- 46 "The — of Amontillado"
- 47 Inter
- 48 Osses
- 49 Mighty mite
- 50 Salamander
- 51 Of an age
- 52 Ms of music
- 53 Dock workers' org.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NOLFE

SAUME

YORPTS

BURNEM

Answer: THEIR

Yesterday's Jumble: CRAZE ANKLE MELODY BUTLER

Answer: You don't appreciate the usefulness of this until you use it up — AN UMBRELLA

U.N. prepares to send aid convoy to Mostar Muslims

MOSTAR (R) — The United Nations Monday prepared to send food and medicine to besieged Muslims in Mostar, but the Bosnian Croats controlling access to the city were still refusing permission for convoys to enter.

The U.N. hopes to deliver 130 tonnes of supplies Wednesday to the Muslim side of the city in southwest Bosnia, where 55,000 people are trapped. Food, water and medical supplies are scarce.

A U.N. advance convoy Sunday made a small delivery of medical supplies to the makeshift hospital in the Muslim quarter which is struggling to treat patients without anaesthetic, electricity or running water.

U.N. officials were holding fresh negotiations Monday with the Bosnian Croat Forces (HVO) who control the access routes into Mostar to gain entry to the Muslim sector, but reported little progress.

"We very much hope that Wednesday will be the day that

the HVO finally decides they are no longer going to be bloody-minded and they will allow us to take a convoy through," said Lyndall Sachs, spokeswoman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

She said the price of taking aid to the Muslims may be to deliver an equal amount to the Croat-held part of the city, which still needed help, although less than the Muslim sector.

The Muslim-held part of the west bank of the Neretva River has been reduced to rubble by fighting between Muslim-led government forces and HVO.

Most Muslim civilians have moved to the east bank, joining residents crowded into buildings on streets further away from the constant threat of mortar and sniper fire. Even here, there are many bombed-out buildings.

The quarter was relatively quiet Monday morning, after almost continuous sniping and shelling over the past few days.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo appealed to the United Nations Security Council for help in getting emergency aid to the Muslim-held quarter, describing the siege as a "true catastrophe."

In a letter to the U.N., Mr. Izetbegovic said Bosnian Croat Forces had conducted an ethnic cleansing campaign to clear the area of Muslims and urged that the southwestern city be declared a U.N. safe area similar to Sarajevo.

Amid the fighting, Serb, Croat and Muslim assemblies are due to meet separately this week to discuss a proposed peace agreement that emerged last week from peace talks in Geneva.

The Bosnian Republic's parliament will meet Friday to debate the plan, but Mr. Izetbegovic said he would tell the representatives to reject the compromise agreement.

"I will not propose that they vote for such a proposal," he told

reporters Sunday. If further talks fail, the Bosnian president said differences would have to be settled in combat.

Government army officers dismissed the peace map that would carve Bosnia into three ethnic mini-states.

"If the government decides to accept the plan there would be a military coup," said an officer who identified himself as Nezir, deputy commander of the 17th Brigade in the central Bosnian city of Travnik.

Croat and Serb leaders have said the plan was the best compromise that could be achieved.

"I will fight for acceptance of the plan," Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic told Reuters Television. He said if the war continued, the Muslims would be held responsible.

A source in the Bosnian Serbs' self-styled parliament in Pale outside Sarajevo, said the assembly expected to meet Saturday and Sunday.



An elderly man pulls his belongings on a luggage trolley as he walks by a parking lot full of car wrecks in Sarajevo (AFP photo)

Michael Jackson launches Asian tour

BANGKOK (AFP) — U.S. pop star Michael Jackson launched the Asian leg of his world tour here Monday with a press conference at which he sang not a single note, spoke only nine words and left hundreds of female fans screaming his name.

The 34-year-old Jackson rode onto the stage of a hotel ballroom in a local three-wheeled conveyance known as a "tuk-tuk," which was decorated with the logo of the soft drink company that is sponsoring his Dangerous tour. Thai girls in native dress strewed flower petals in his path as the singer stepped onto the stage, and dozens in the crowd shouted "Michael, Michael," trying to get his attention.

Throughout the 45-minute media event, loudspeakers blared one Jackson hit after another. Then Tony Illsey, president of Pepsi-Cola Asia Pacific, presented Jackson with a check for two million baht (\$80,000) for the singer's Heal the World Foundation. Part of the money will go to charities in Thailand, Mr. Illsey said. Asked to say a "few" words, Jackson said: "I love you, and thank you very, very much," as scores of photographers — most of them standing on chairs — snapped his picture. Jackson's tour began last summer in Europe. Details of the Asian leg have been kept shrouded in secrecy, but he is known to be heading for Singapore after Bangkok and will also appear in Taipei.

L.A. county coroner opens little shop of horrors

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Los Angeles County Coroner's Office has its own little shop of horrors where it markets the morbid — from personalised tote bags to skeleton tote bags. There's even a beach towel with a chalk body outline. The gift shop called Skeletons In The Closet also sells T-shirts, coffee mugs and other morose souvenirs. Proceeds go to a programme aimed at scaring youths out of drinking and driving. "Bodies and death are our business. We're just trying to take advantage of it," said Marilyn Lewis, the coroner's new marketing programme coordinator. The \$4 personalised tote bags, used to identify cadavers, are "the real things," she said. The marketing push has raised \$15,000 over the past year for a programme that brings convicted 16-to 21-year-old drunken drivers to the morgue for a firsthand look at the deadly effects of roadway intoxication. "It seems to have a very definite and real impact on people," said Chris Harvey, who oversees the tours. "They leave with their eyes wide open and a different outlook on life."

5 Filipino prisoners escape jail using guitar

MANILA (R) — Five Filipino prisoners broke out of jail Monday by using the strings of a guitar to saw off the thin metal bars of their detention cell in Manila's Paranaque district, police said. Some of the prisoners pretended to play the guitar and sang songs to cover up the pre-dawn escape. The window opened to a street where witnesses saw the five prisoners get into a van heading for a residential area near the financial district of Makati, police investigator Maximo Perez said by telephone. The five, ranging in age from 30 to 40, had been jailed for crimes ranging from illegal possession of drugs to robbery. Police launched a manhunt for the prisoners.

China cracks biggest pornography case since 1949

PEKING (R) — Police in north China have cracked the biggest pornography case since the Communist state was set up in 1949, seizing 680,000 salacious magazines, the official Press and Publishing Journal said Monday. The case involved five printing factories in the provinces of Hebei and Shandong, which in the past two years produced 850,000 illegal publications, including the pornographic magazines. After a shipment of magazines was uncovered in Hebei, police arrested the chief of one of the factories and two of his assistants. The factory, set up without a licence in February, had 45 staff, including 20 women — the youngest under 13, the newspaper said.

Venice gondoliers repay fleeced French tourists

VENICE, Italy (R) — Remorseful Venetian gondoliers clubbed together to pay back a French couple charged an extortionate 500,000 lire (\$340) for an hour's ride along the city's canals. Italian newspapers reported Monday. The couple, from Brittany, had filed a formal complaint before they went home earlier this month. They received a full refund from the gondoliers and a note expressing "profound regrets" at the incident.

Mandela: Government lacks will to end unrest

JOHANNESBURG (R) — African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela said Monday that South Africa's white minority government did not have the will or desire to end the violence sweeping the country.

The ANC chief said Sunday's massacre of 12 blacks at a metal factory was part of a bloody campaign to stop the transition to black rule.

"We have suggested ways to the government to end the violence. It is clear the government has either lost control of the security forces or elements in the security forces are doing what the government wants them to do," Mr. Mandela told reporters.

"It is clear there are elements determined to derail the peace process. We must expect this to continue until a new, democratic and legitimate government is in place."

The Scaw Metals' factory dead were among at least 35 people killed in weekend violence throughout South Africa.

Eleven people died in the East Rand townships of Krugersdorp, Tokozo and Voorsburg 'espionage' the presence of large numbers of police and soldiers.

At least 12 were killed in Natal province, including a black man and woman riddled by bullets in a highway ambush near Estcourt in the Natal midlands.

At least 900 people have been killed in political violence since early July when multi-party negotiations set April 27 as the date for South Africa's first all-race elections. Nearly half have died in Johannesburg's satellite townships.

The ANC demands a multi-party national peacekeeping force be set up urgently to restore peace to townships ravaged by factional fighting.

It charges hardline elements in the white-led security forces are fomenting violence to divide blacks and perpetuate apartheid — an accusation vigorously denied by the police and army.

Deputy Law and Order Minister Gert Myburgh Monday visited wounded victims of the factory attack at Germiston south of Johannesburg and said police would vigorously hunt the three black gunmen.

He appealed to hostel-dwellers not to seek revenge for the killing, one of the most savage incidents since black gunmen killed 11 people, most of them white, at St. James's Church in Cape Town last month.

The Germiston gunmen, armed with AK-47 rifles, opened fire on Xhosa-speaking workers and their wives who were holding an outdoor meeting. The attack took place near where gunmen

stopped a mini-bus taxi shot dead seven Zulus last month.

Most of South Africa's township warfare is between predominantly Xhosa-speaking ANC supporters and followers of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party.

The government offered a 250,000 rand (\$80,000) reward for information leading to the arrest of the factory killers — the same as put up over the Cape Town church killing. The ANC had demanded the police treat the factory slaughter on the same level as the killing of the whites.

Tony Harris, managing director of Scaw Metals, a subsidiary of the Anglo American Corporation, said in a statement: "The hostel has a non-political profile. Those living in this hostel comprise different ethnic groups and include supporters of several different political parties."

Clashes erupt in 2nd Azeri breakaway region

MOSCOW (AFP) — Troops loyal to a renegade Azerbaijani colonel who has declared independence in the southern Azeri region of Talyskh-Mugansk exchanged gunfire with pro-government demonstrators Monday, the Azeri News Agency, Turan, reported.

Turan said there were dead and wounded on both sides. Quoting the governing Popular Front, the agency said followers of Colonel Aliakram Gumbatov opened fire on demonstrators who stormed a local government building where he was staying in the region's main city of Lenkoran. The protesters fired back, it said.

The Azeri Interior Ministry told the agency the protesters gained control of the building and Col. Gumbatov was reported missing, but it had no further details.

Several Azerbaijani political parties loyal to the authorities in Baku demonstrated Sunday against the separatist drive by Col. Gumbatov, who on Aug. 7 declared the Talyskh-Mugansk Republic a sovereign nation.

The region has about 700,000 inhabitants spread along the Iranian border and the Caspian Sea. Its capital, Lenkoran, has a population of about 126,000, Turan said.

Nigeria signals tough stance against union

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military government said it planned to restructure the main trade union — an apparent response to the union's decision to call a strike if President Ibrahim Babangida does not quit power by his Friday deadline.

Information Minister Uche Chukwumerije said in the capital Abuja the plan was to make membership of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) voluntary in line with the International Labour Organisation's standards, the News Agency of Nigeria reported.

Voluntary membership would severely reduce the funds the NLC gets through a compulsory check-off system.

The 3.5-million-strong NLC, and the 50,000-strong oil workers group Nupeng have threatened to strike from the weekend unless General Babangida surrenders power by Aug. 27 when he had repeatedly pledged he would hand over to civilians.

Nupeng, whose strike could cripple crude oil exports, Nigeria's main source of foreign exchange, said power should be handed to Moshood Abiola, the muslim millionaire businessman believed to have won last June's annulled presidential poll.

Mr. Chukwumerije, former trade unionist, said he should defy the strike.

that the NLC ultimatum was mas-termined by a section of the congress in the southwestern part of the country, an apparent reference to Mr. Abiola's home region.

Nigeria Monday entered one of the most crucial weeks in its history with no indication how Gen. Babangida, in power since 1983, planned to resolve the crisis that has engulfed the country since he cancelled the June 12 election.

"This is the week that makes or breaks Nigeria," said lawyer Michael Otiang as fears mounted that the political crisis could erupt into widespread violence in Africa's most populous nation.

Mr. Abiola said Gen. Babangida would not leave office voluntarily.

"Babangida has no intention of honouring his many promises to hand over power to a democratically-elected civilian government," he said in statements faxed to Reuters from London, where he has been rallying support for his claim to the presidency.

Mr. Abiola said he had delayed returning to Nigeria on the advice of family and friends that it was not safe but pledged he would be back by Aug. 27. "I will be back on Nigerian soil by the 27th. I will keep my fate with destiny," he said.

Cambodian leaders get lavish Hanoi welcome

HANOI (R) — Cambodia's new co-presidents, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, received a lavish official welcome in Hanoi Monday when they arrived to shore up relations with Vietnam, their country's most powerful neighbour.

The fate of ethnic Vietnamese residents of Cambodia who have fled attacks by Khmer Rouge Communist guerrillas and are stranded in the border area will be high on the agenda of their talks with Vietnamese Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet, according to Hanoi officials.

A United Nations spokesman in Cambodia Monday said Khmer Rouge guerrillas were suspected of killing two Vietnamese fishermen whose battered and bullet-riddled bodies were found in central Cambodia at the weekend, the latest in a new spate of anti-Vietnamese violence.

The Cambodian leaders will also be seeking to establish a personal relationship with Kiet and other Vietnamese officials, as they already have with the heads of Cambodia's other neighbours, Thailand and Laos, in visits over the past month.

Rightist Nicaraguans free 20 hostages

EL ZUNIGANO, Nicaragua (R) — Rightist guerrillas released Sunday 20 of the 38 Nicaraguan government officials and leftist Sandinista politicians they have been holding hostage since Thursday, officials said.

But as the captives walked free in this northern village, a second hostage standoff continued in the capital Managua where leftist gunmen have seized the country's vice-president and a score of other top politicians.

Francisco Mayorga, spokesman for a negotiating commission seeking the release of the hostages near this remote mountain village in northern Nicaragua, said the remaining 18 hostages held by the rightists could also be freed within hours.

The rightist guerrillas, led by former combat rebel Jose Angel Talavera, alias El Chacal (The Jackal), "announce the immediate handover of the people

held, with 20 people today. Foreseeing the handover of the rest in the coming hours," an accord read to reporters by Mr. Mayorga said.

He said the accord was not signed by Mr. Talavera but by his brother and top lieutenant, Salvador Talavera, after consultations with El Chacal.

A Renter correspondent saw the 20 people, 17 soldiers and three government officials, arrive in the nearby town of Quilali following their release.

The release could be a major advance towards resolving the two hostage standoffs, which have highlighted the bitter post-war divisions lingering in this nation of just over three million people, one of the poorest in the Americas.

In Managua, leftist gunmen are holding hostage Vice-President Virgilio Godoy, about eight journalists and a score of conservative

politicians of the National Opposition Union (UNO).

The Managua gunmen have said they will not release their captives until all those held by the former contras are freed.

The leader of the Managua group of leftist gunmen said earlier Sunday that two hostages would be released on health grounds, but it was unclear when Mr. Godoy was not among those to be released.

In an explosion of anger earlier Sunday, Commando 31's men fired shots in the air and at the roof of a nearby building where they said they saw snipers. No one was hurt and police did not return fire.

They also forced UNO leader Alfredo Cesar and other hostages up against the windows of the party's headquarters in their underwear, as human shields against a feared police attack which never came.

Angolan forces retake eastern town

SAO TOME (Agencies) — Angolan government forces have retaken the town of Camanongue in eastern Angola from UNITA rebels, Angolan state radio said Monday.

The radio, monitored in the island state of Sao Tome and Principe, said government troops inflicted dozens of casualties on UNITA fighters in the weekend battle for Camanongue, 52 kilometres from the previously besieged city of Luena.

Camanongue is on the road north from Luena, capital of Mexico Province, to Saurimo, capital of Lunda South province, which has also been under rebel siege for several months.

The World Food Programme (WFP) resumed aid flights to Luena and Saurimo last week. It had suspended them after UNITA fired at a U.N. plane in northwestern Angola in mid-July.

UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of

Angola) occupied Camanongue last October when it went back to war against the ruling MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola).

The two sides signed agreements to end 16 years of civil war in 1991 but UNITA took up arms again last year after losing elections to the MPLA.

State radio and UNITA radio both reported that government and rebel representatives were due to take part in a series of meetings in the Zimbabwean capital Harare Monday with the aim of resurrecting the peace process.

The radios said the U.N. special representative in Angola, Aloune Blondin Beye, Angolan Foreign Minister Venancio de Moura and UNITA's acting secretary for foreign affairs, Paulo Lukamba Gato, would also meet Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe.

Mr. Beye and Mr. De Moura

flew into Harare at the weekend.

Mr. Beye's predecessor, Briton Margaret Anstee, organised U.N.-sponsored peace talks in the Ivory Coast capital Abidjan earlier this year, but they collapsed after six weeks when UNITA refused to sign a peace protocol which the government accepted.

Mr. Beye said Sunday that no date had yet been set for a new round of peace talks, which were expected to start in Harare or another African capital by Sept. 15 at the latest.

The U.N. Security Council meets on Sept. 15 to review the Angolan situation. It has threatened UNITA with sanctions if it does not honour the 1991 peace agreements by then.

"The Angolan army's push against UNITA positions in central and southern regions this month has shaken the rebel movement, the Jornal de Angola newspaper said here Monday.

Armenians take Fizuli

Meanwhile separatist Karabakh Armenian forces claimed control of the strategic town of Fizuli after driving out Azerbaijani troops, both sides to the conflict announced Monday.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry said the Armenian troops, who had been besieging Fizuli for two weeks, launched a final assault on the town overnight Saturday.

It said reinforcements from the Azeri army had to be brought in to carry out a diversion tactics in order to allow trapped fellow soldiers to escape through the southern part of town.

Armenian military officials said Monday that their troops had entered Fizuli, located southeast of the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, "without any combat" Sunday evening.

"The city was completely empty, there were no soldiers, no Azerbaijani civilians," the Snark News Agency said, quoting Armenian officials.

The fall of Fizuli is a major defeat for the Azerbaijani troops who have been losing ground to the separatists.

Hosokawa apologises for war; will tackle corruption

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, making his first policy speech to parliament Monday, made a formal apology for his country's wartime atrocities in Asia but held back from offering compensation.

Mr. Hosokawa, who rode to power on an anti-graft platform, also pledged a crackdown on political corruption.

"I would thus like to take this opportunity to express our profound remorse and apologies for the fact that past Japanese actions, including aggression and colonial rule, caused unbearable suffering and sorrow for so many people," Mr. Hosokawa said.

Japan would contribute "more than ever before to world peace," he added.

Leaders of previous administration under the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which lost its 38-year hold on power to Mr. Hosokawa's multi-party alliance, steadfastly refused to say in parliament that Japan fought a war of aggression.

When necessary, they offered vaguely-worded apologies to Asian countries, fuelling suspi-

cion that Japan felt little, if any, remorse for its wartime conduct.

The government's new willingness to face Japan's past has already stirred demands by Asian war victims. Over 13,000 Indonesians who worked as forced labourers during the 1942-45 Japanese occupation have registered to seek compensation.

Taiwanese, South Korean and Malaysian women forced to serve as wartime prostitutes for Japanese soldiers have said they will seek compensation by filing lawsuits in Tokyo.

Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata said last week that, while Japan considered it had already settled the reparations issue through bilateral or multilateral treaties, the government could consider individual claims.

Mr. Hosokawa, who took office two weeks ago, made no mention of the issue of compensation, however.

Setting out government policy, Mr. Hosokawa repeated election pledges to clean up political corruption, symbolised by the scandal-ridden LDP, by the year's end.

Moscow events cast shadow over autumn offensive

MOSCOW (R) — A bullet rips through a minister's office, a top anti-corruption official says he is the target of a murder plot by the chief prosecutor, a second minister steps down accusing "mafia bands" of making a push for Kremlin power.

Recent events in Moscow provide an increasingly sinister backdrop to President Boris Yeltsin's struggle with Russia's conservative parliament.

As Mr. Yeltsin prepares his approaching "autumn offensive" against the hardliners the shadow of corruption is growing, longer, with both sides slinging accusations at each other.

Foreign Trade Minister Sergei Glazev resigned at the weekend, declaring what all hardliners had long said: "Mafia bands" feeding on corruption were nosing their way to power. He accused two close Yeltsin allies of hounding him from office.

The mafia accusations, this time from an insider rather than a nationalist or Communist foe of Mr. Yeltsin, may cut deep.

"At a time when consolidation is vital in presidential and government structures, talk about infighting in the cabinet rather than admissions of professional errors is to be deeply regretted," Fore-

ign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said.

Mr. Glazev linked his sudden fall — his aircraft was recalled to Moscow hours after leaving for Africa — with new rules he issued capping the number of firms exporting metals and oil.

If enforced, the rules could make inroads into illicit trade below market prices that has cost Russia millions of dollars.

A presidential commission drew a picture last week of a pyramid of corruption, founded largely on private firms dealing illicitly in oil and metal exports. They controlled a layer of corrupt middle-level officials protected in turn by top law enforcement figures and senior politicians.

Justice Minister Yuri Kalmykov singled out one firm operating from abroad that he said was set up on Communist Party funds smuggled from Russia.

"This firm hangs like a dark shadow over Russia, its aim to undermine our economy," he said.

But Mr. Yeltsin and his conservative rivals differ on who stands atop that pyramid, controlling the officials, taking the bribes. Mr. Yeltsin's commission points the finger directly at pres-

idential enemies, including Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi.

Andrei Makarov, head of the presidential commission, accuses Mr. Rutskoi of keeping a secret Swiss bank account. Mr. Rutskoi denies the charge, insisting he has "suitcases full" of evidence against the Yeltsin administration.

Mr. Makarov raised the temperature of the debate by declaring Chief Prosecutor Valentine Stepankov had entertained ideas of his murder. He produced a tape transcript of an elliptical telephone conversation between Mr. Stepankov, no ally of Mr. Yeltsin, and Dmitry Yakubovsky, a former KGB official now living in Canada.

Mr. Stepankov acknowledged on television Sunday the conversation had taken place but denied murder was being discussed. He suggested Mr. Yakubovsky was trying to compromise him.

For all the turmoil of the post-Soviet era, Russia has been spared the political violence blighting other former republics.

But in the early hours of Sunday, three shots shattered windows at a Moscow building housing Russia's Ministry of Information and the office of Mr. Yeltsin aide Mikhail Poltoranin.

One went through the window of Minister Mikhail Fedotov's office and two others shattered panes on the same floor.

It was not immediately clear who fired the rifle shots. Were they intended as a threat to Mr. Fedotov, who formally resigned his post last week, or perhaps the man who will replace him?

Mr. Yeltsin, facing an attempt by parliament to increase its hold over television, may appoint a more aggressive figure.

Mr. Poltoranin, himself the subject of corruption investigations by Mr. Stepankov, may soon occupy the office that came under fire.

Mr. Yeltsin has promised a crackdown on corruption, putting his house in order for parliamentary elections he hopes will take place this autumn. More ministers may follow Security Minister Viktor Barannikov, sacked for unethical behaviour, and Mr. Glazev.

But it is unclear how far Mr. Yeltsin can risk going in his purge without undermining his own power. Corruption, inherited from the Soviet order and flourishing in the chaos of Russia's market transition, seems to know no political boundaries.

